

Review Packet

*Master's Comprehensive
Examination*

Special Education

General Information

- ❖ ❖ The Masters Comprehensive Examination is offered once during each of the long semesters and during the first summer session.
- ❖ ❖ The Comprehensive Examination is taken during the student's last semester to assess the student's level of knowledge of both general special education issues and their specialty area.
- ❖ ❖ The student must complete an application in the Office of Graduate Research Services or online at www.educ.ttu.edu at the beginning of the semester that the student wishes to complete the examination.
- ❖ ❖ Students should note on their application if they will need special, reasonable accommodations due to a disabling condition.
- ❖ ❖ The examination may be taken by hand or on computer. This must be specified on the application.
- ❖ ❖ The student answers two essay questions: one in the area of general special education and one in their specialty area. Two or three questions are presented on the comprehensive examination allowing the student to choose one from each of the two areas to complete. The student will complete two, two-hour questions.
- ❖ ❖ Four hours are scheduled for the examination with two hours given to each question.
- ❖ ❖ A general orientation session is held several weeks prior to the comprehensive examination date each semester to answer student questions.
- ❖ ❖ Preparation for the comprehensive examination is the responsibility of the student, is not tied to any one course directly and is not the

responsibility of the student's advisor. While a student may ask about the examination, faculty members are not responsible for providing any additional information or direction other than this booklet.

The Day of the Examination

- ❖ ❖ On the day of the examination, students will report to the appointed room.
- ❖ ❖ Students must have noted on their application any special, reasonable accommodations that are needed on the day of the examination.
- ❖ ❖ No food or drinks are allowed in the computer lab.
- ❖ ❖ Restroom breaks are permissible but additional time is not given to the student to complete the examination.
- ❖ ❖ A monitor will be present in the examination room.
- ❖ ❖ Students will use the equipment provided by the College with the exception of pens or pencils.
- ❖ ❖ Students may not bring their own lap top computer.
- ❖ ❖ Students should be extra careful to continually save information produced on the computer in case of electronic/computer malfunction.
- ❖ ❖ Students receive both the general special education questions and the specialization questions at the beginning of the comprehensive examination period. It is the student's responsibility to budget their time in order to completely and thoroughly answer each question.
- ❖ ❖ Some students find that the following format is helpful when taking the examination:

First 15-30 minutes	Write outline with major points/authors including an introductory & summary paragraph. Major points should include each part of the question.
Next hour	Write response utilizing the outline
Last 15-30minutes	Read response, proof for writing style, examine accuracy of statements as well as APA style, and check to see if it actually answers all parts of the question.

Study Tips

- ❖ ❖ Students preparing for the comprehensive examination should review course information completed in both their general special education courses as well as in the areas of their specialization.
- ❖ ❖ Learning the leading authors in both general special education and the area of their specialization as well as their contributions is necessary for successful performance on the comprehensive examination.
- ❖ ❖ Organizing information and author contributions by major topic areas may facilitate preparation and performance.
- ❖ ❖ Sample questions are included in this packet to give students an idea of the types of questions they may be asked. These questions should not be construed as the only areas of study.
- ❖ ❖ Outlining of major topic areas with points by specific authors is also an effective way to study for the comprehensive examination.
- ❖ ❖ Students should be able to document citations correctly in the current APA format.

❖ ❖ Students should utilize texts, journal articles, and information gathered during the Master's degree coursework as the basis for their comprehensive examination study materials.

❖ ❖ Knowledge of the contributing authors in the field of general special education and the student's specialization area as well as their major emphasizes is more desirable than memorization of a few specific quotations for citation in the body of the comprehensive examination.

❖ ❖ Students should be prepared to answer questions both factually as well as reflectively to indicate the student's ability to write professionally in the field of Special Education.

Scoring of the Examination

❖ ❖ The examinations are scored by two faculty members independently.

❖ ❖ Each examination is scored using the evaluation form provided in the Master's Degree Program booklet available in the Division of Educational Psychology and Leadership Office.

❖ ❖ While there is no set number or citations required for an answer, students should completely document each major point with one or two authors.

For example:

Effective teaching practices have a significant impact on successful inclusionary practices. The dimension of effective practices include management

considerations, instructional practices, and evaluative and collaborative activities (Polloway & Patton, 1997)

❖ ❖ Students using the computer are allowed to utilize both grammar and spell checking programs and are encouraged to do so during a final proofing session. Students who are hand-writing the examination are strongly encouraged to reread their examinations for grammar and spelling accuracy.

❖ ❖ Scoring takes 2-3 weeks and students will be notified in six weeks as to their status.

❖ ❖ One failing score results in another reading by an additional faculty member in Special Education.

❖ ❖ The faculty can request an oral examination for a failing comprehensive examination effort when deemed necessary.

❖ ❖ Students may retake the examination once after a lapse of one semester.

*Master's Comprehensive Exams
(Previously Used)
General Special Education*

Directions: All students are required to answer one of the following questions. On the actual exam you will have only three choices.

1. 1. Changing social priorities and data regarding special education outcomes have led to a reexamination of the effectiveness of special education programs in terms of educational policies, the application of research-

based best practices in the classroom, and cost effectiveness. Identify and discuss recent trends involved in efforts to provide an appropriate education for students with disabilities.

- a. a. Compare the goals and intentions of early advocates for persons with disabilities with current special education practices and policies.
- b. b. Research has presumably provided educators with the opportunity to use effective instructional methodologies designed to meet the individual needs of students with disabilities. Suggest what you believe to be important contributions of research for improving instructional methodology for students with disabilities. In addition, suggest ways of applying research in the class and enhancing the role of teachers as participants in research.
- c. c. Efforts to provide services to students with disabilities have often been determined by limited funding resources. Comment on the following:
 - i. i. Investment in special education is not in accordance with the needs of the majority nor the failure of special education to achieve its goals.
 - ii. ii. Suggest a creative restructuring of education that will realistically address the educational needs of all students.

2. 2. Legislation and litigation have attempted to resolve several issues regarding the education of persons with disabilities.

- a. a. Discuss the history of legislation and litigation regarding the following issues in special education:
 - i. i. Provision for appropriate education and necessary special services
 - ii. ii. Educational placement
 - iii. iii. Discipline
- b. b. Prescribe the elements of a program and courses of action that would lead to effective and satisfactory resolutions of problematic situations regarding the educational needs of persons with disabilities.

General Special Education Questions – Cont.

3. 3. "Inclusion is the philosophy, integration is the practice." Explain this statement, referencing philosophy and practice. Included in your discussion: (a) definitions of inclusion from at least two perspectives and (b) a description of an inclusive school based on best practice literature.

4. 4. There are those who advocate abolishing all special classes and inclusion for all exceptional children. Others suggest moderation and present evidence in support of special classes. Analyze both viewpoints, including a review of some of the legislation and/or litigation regarding mainstream/special class models that have been proposed. Evaluate the theoretical basis for each viewpoint within the context of special education.

5. 5. Educators are continually being criticized for implementing procedures and programs with insufficient research data to validate such a change.

- a. a. Discuss situations (problem area, trend, etc.) in which criticism may be applicable in special education.
- b. b. Discuss the research needed to provide the necessary validating data for the situation discussed above.
- c. c. Analyze the implications for the discipline in terms of change agents, political involvement, and economics.

6. 6. Discuss, with appropriate documentation, the controversy concerning the value of standardized assessment procedures for handicapped and other atypical groups. Consideration should be given to: (a) research, (b) legislation, (c) emerging education assessment instruments and procedures. Analyze the theoretical basis for differential assessment of handicapped students with appropriate documentation.

*Master's Comprehensive Exams
(Previously Used)
Generic Special Education*

1. 1. Explain the differences in a structured and unstructured classroom. Describe how these classroom arrangements might be beneficial to students with learning disabilities. What adaptations and modifications would a general education teacher have to make in each setting in order to enable a student with learning disabilities to be successful in each general education setting? How will the special education teacher aid in collaboration with a general education teacher in each setting?

2. 2. Discuss the common adjustment reactions that parents of a child with a mild to moderate disabilities may experience over time. How may parents' reactions change over the course of the four major transition periods for students in school? What effect do parental adjustment reactions have on the classroom, the student's performance, and the parent/teacher relationship?

3. 3. Define the least restrictive environment, mainstreaming and inclusion. How are each of these terms carried out in the education of students with learning disabilities, emotional disturbance and mental retardation? Is there one of these terms that is of more importance in the education of students with mild to moderate disabilities? How are these terms positively and negatively impacting the education of students with mild to moderate disabilities?

*Master's Comprehensive Exams
(Previously Used)
Educational Diagnostician*

Directions: All students are required to answer one of the following questions. On the actual exam you will have only three choices.

1. 1. P.L. 101-476 (IDEA) mandates a multidisciplinary assessment process for all children referred for special education services. Discuss the definition of multidisciplinary assessment and the process that ensures compliance with the law including:
 - a. Sources of information
 - b. Choice of assessment instruments
 - c. Personnel involved
 - d. Use of assessment information
 - e. Development of IEPs

2. 2. Eligibility for special education services is based on assessment data gathered from many sources. Discuss the eligibility criteria for each of the disability categories listed below including: legal definition, formal assessment data required, controversial issues, and specific eligibility criteria mandated by law.
 - a. Learning disabilities
 - b. Mental retardation
 - c. Emotional disturbance
 - d. Multiple disabilities
 - e. Traumatic brain injury
 - f. Autism
 - g. Non-categorical assignment

3. 3. Assessment specialists must constantly balance the ethical issues of assessment with the needs of students experiencing school failure and a concerned teacher or administrator. Discuss the ethical issues involved in

determining a student's eligibility for special education services. Be sure to include such issues as: language dominance, educational opportunity, and the ability to follow school rules.

4. 4. Authentic assessment is a current trend in special education assessment. Discuss the definition, purpose and use of authentic assessment. Include in your answer: noted professionals in the field, research regarding authentic devices and techniques and controversial issues surrounding the use of such techniques.

Educational Diagnostician Questions - Cont.

5. 5. Intelligence testing is required of several special education categories. Discuss these specific criteria regarding cognitive assessment for each special education category, and if appropriate guidelines for selection of intelligence measures. Give a rationale for omitting or including intelligence scores in Comprehensive Individual Assessment reports for each of these categories.

Other broad topic areas:

- Non-discriminatory evaluation procedures
- Labeling and classification
- Comparison of Section 504, Special Education Eligibility
and Americans with Disabilities Act
- Litigation and legislation (assessment)
- Intelligence Tests (The good, the bad and the ugly!)

*Master's Comprehensive Exams
(Previously Used)
VI Questions*

1. 1. Discuss curriculum needs of VI students who are totally blind, low vision and multi-handicapped. Include in your answer for each category:
 - a. Assessment
 - b. Curriculum areas with rationale for need
 - c. Service delivery options

2. 2. Early concept development for VI infants and children is very important. Discuss:
 - a. Need for intervention
 - b. Role for parents
 - c. Areas for activity
 - d. Strategies for developing concepts

3. 3. Research is limited in relation to the field of visual impairment. Discuss:

- a. Recent research studies
 - b. Barriers to research
 - c. Areas of research need
4. 4. Low vision is the subject of much recent interest in the field.
Discuss:
- a. Impact of low vision on the child
 - b. Curriculum essentials
 - c. Role of various members of a team to some children with low vision
5. 5. Self-concept is very important in the attainment of fulfillment for VI students. Discuss:
- a. Factors influencing self-concept related to visual impairment
 - b. Strategies for developing positive self-concept
 - c. Research related to self-concept in VI students

*Master's Comprehensive Exams
(Previously Used)
Orientation and Mobility*

Directions: All students are required to answer one of the following questions.

1. Welsh and Blasch in *Foundations of Orientation and Mobility* discuss the elements of a profession. The profession of orientation and mobility is over 40 years old. Discuss how the field of orientation and mobility became a profession using Greenwood's elements:
 - a. A body of systematic knowledge

- b. Authority granted by clientele of a particular service
- c. Community sanction of this authority
- d. A code of ethics
- e. A professional culture encouraged by professional associations

In addition, discuss future directions in the field of orientation and mobility.

2. Orientation and mobility specialists are certified to train persons with vision problems of all ages. Discuss factors that orientation and mobility specialists must account for when training children with visual impairments and older adults with vision impairments. Discuss in detail learning theories, assessment procedures, training plans and programs, teaching strategies, motivational factors and resources to access.

*Master's Comprehensive Exams
(Previously Used)
Deaf-blind*

1. Compare the development of a child with deaf-blindness to a hearing impaired child and to a visually impaired child in these areas: communication, cognition, motor, social.
2. John, a fifteen-year-old boy who has deaf-blindness, is scheduled for his three-year evaluation. The school diagnostician asks you to list all the areas that John should be evaluated in and suggest some appropriate assessment instruments in each area.
3. Describe your philosophy of integration for students with deaf-blindness in public education programs.