

UNIVERSITY OF WEST FLORIDA

School of Allied Health and Life Sciences

A CEPH Accredited Program

Master of Public Health Comprehensive Exam Guide

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About the Manual

This manual is a compilation of philosophy, policies, procedures and requirements of the MPH comprehensive exam experience. It is intended for use by students as they consider application to sit for the exam.

Although this manual contains the most pertinent information students will need, students should also be familiar with the School of Allied Health and Life Sciences curriculum policies. Faculty and staff of the program are readily available to students for guidance and are prepared to assist them in monitoring their progress toward achieving degree requirements. The School of Allied Health and Life Sciences reserves the right to add, delete, or modify all and any provisions in this manual.

Introduction and Purpose

The Comprehensive Exam is part of the culminating/capstone experience of the MPH program. The exam is designed to assess the student's level of mastery of the core competencies acquired in the MPH core courses. Students will not be tested on isolated facts but will be given objective questions that test the depth of the level of knowledge gained in the core subject areas of public health. The expanded format of the exam covers the five core and five required courses, as well as the two elective courses the student chooses to complete. Following completion of the core courses students must take the Comprehensive Exam as a requirement for graduation. Effective Fall 2009, students must now complete a two-part comprehensive exam modeled after the National Board of Public Health Examiners – Certified in Public Health exam and covers taken in the program.

The courses over which students will be tested include:

- **MPH core courses:**
 1. STA 5176: Biostatistics
 2. PHC 6000: Epidemiology for Public Health Professionals
 3. HSA 5115: Health Care Policy and Administration
 4. PHC 5410: Social and Behavioral Sciences in Public Health
 5. PHC 6018: Survey of Environmental Problems

- **Required Courses**
 1. PHC 6015: Epidemiological Study Design and Stat. Methods
 2. PHC 6251: Disease Surveillance and Monitoring or
PHC 6XXX GIS Applications in Public Health
 3. PHC 5991: Scientific Basis of Public Health
 4. PHC 6196: Computer Applications in Public Health
 5. PHC 599X: Public Health Preparedness

The comprehensive exam is administered as a closed-book exam that must be submitted electronically to the program. It requires an in-depth of principles, theories, and concepts that guide public health practice and research; and the application of this knowledge to contemporary public health issues. Thus, Internet-connectivity during the exam is a mandatory. In addition to Internet connectivity, students must have access to a computer terminal with [Respondus Lockdown](#) browser. If the student must take the exam at a distance, it is the responsibility of the student to secure a Proctor and a facility with these capabilities. The comprehensive exam is intended to be as defined in the dictionary “comprehensive”, “covering completely or broadly”. The student must demonstrate an in-depth and broad understanding of the field of public health and its guiding principles. The comprehensive examination requires broad preparation in the field of public health and includes questions requiring critical thinking employing knowledge from the core courses.

Registering for the Exam

Each student must submit a written request using the **Comprehensive Exam Registration Form** to the Director of the MPH program to take the exam. Students within UWF's geographic area (residence within 50 miles of UWF) must complete the exam requirements at UWF. Students outside of the 50 mile radius also have the option to complete the exam on-site at UWF if they choose. A student must be in good academic standing to sit for the Comprehensive Exam. Students must earn a grade of "C" or better in all courses in the MPH program in order to remain in good standing within the program and maintain an overall grade average of "B" in order to remain in good standing within the program and in order to graduate from the program. All requests to take the Comprehensive Exam will receive a written or email response on the **Comprehensive Exam Scheduling Form**, indicating the date, time and location for the exam. If the exam is conducted at a site outside the geographic area of UWF, the exam must be conducted in the presence of an approved proctor, with the additional submission of a **Proctor Approval Form** required before the exam can be scheduled. It is the responsibility of the student at a distant location to identify a proctor who meets the proctor requirements set forth on the **Proctor Approval Form**.

Taking the Exam

Effective Fall 2009, students must complete a two-part comprehensive exam modeled after the National Board of Public Health Examiners – Certified in Public Health exam as indicated below:

- Part I will include 250 objective questions and will cover the competencies for the five core courses. Students are encouraged to register to take Part 1 of the exam as soon as they complete the completed the core courses.
- Part II will include 350 objective questions, 250 of which will cover the competencies for the five required courses; an additional 100 will cover the competencies for the two elective courses taken by the student. Part II of the exam can only be completed at the end of the student's enrollment in the program but before graduation.

The exam will be scheduled over a two day period. Ideally students are encouraged to register for and take Part I of the exam as soon as they complete the Core courses. Part II must be completed at the end of the program of study. The exam is only administered once a semester and therefore, students are encouraged to plan accordingly.

Sample Exam Questions

Students are encouraged to prepare binders of review materials from lecture handouts, assigned readings, and other sources in anticipation for exam review. Course textbooks can also be of great use in this process, thus students are encouraged to retain copies of course textbooks. Other suggested readings are posted on the MPH Comprehensive Exam webpage. Further, once a student has applied to take the exam and given clearance by the Program, the student will be granted special access to an online practice exam 30 days prior to the scheduled exam date. Experience has shown that students who have practiced with the mock exam have gone on to do well in the actual exam while those who have not, experienced difficulties. Students will be given four (4) hours to complete the exam. On the day of the exam, students will be given access to the exam in UWF's eLearning system in the presence of a proctor.

Assessment of the Exam

Exams are graded by members of the Internship Coordination Committee (ICC) using a blind review process. All students are required to take and pass the Comprehensive Exam with a grade of 70% or better. Effective Fall 2009, a student must score at least 70% in each of the five core course and five required course domains as well as the electives section of the exam. If a student fails to score 70% in any subject area, he/she must retake that portion of the exam no earlier than two months from the time of the initial exam and no later than one month into the semester in which the student intends to graduate. If on the second attempt the student fails, he/she must go through the remediation plan currently in place. For details on the complete policy regarding comprehensive exam guidelines, see the MPH Comprehensive Exam Guide.

Procedures for Exam Failures

Students who fail the Comprehensive Exam in their first attempt will be allowed to take the exam a second time. For students who fail to pass the exam on their second attempt, the ICC will develop a remediation plan which will include a requirement that the student audit selected core courses prior to taking the exam a third time. Failure to pass the exam in a third attempt will result in dismissal from the MPH program.

Applicable Forms

Forms to meet the requirements for the Comprehensive Exam are available at the site:
<http://uwf.edu/sahls/masters-ph/forms/>

Required forms include:

[Comprehensive Exam Registration Form](#)

[Comprehensive Exam Scheduling Form](#)

[Proctor Approval Form](#) (for exams scheduled outside UWF's geographic area)