

**MASTER'S OPTION GENERAL GUIDELINES**  
**Option 4: Comprehensive Examination**

**College of Education**  
**University of Houston-Clear Lake**

Programs	Thesis	Project	Practicum	Comprehensive Examination
Counseling			✓ <sup>1</sup>	
Curriculum and Instruction	✓	✓	✓	
Early Childhood Education	✓	✓	✓	
Educational Management			✓	
Instructional Technology	✓	✓	✓	
Multicultural Studies in Education	✓	✓		✓
Reading	✓	✓	✓ <sup>2</sup>	
School Library and Information Science			✓	

<sup>1</sup> COUN's Capstone Experience consists of BOTH the Master's Practicum (COUN 6739) and the Counseling Practicum (COUN 5739).

<sup>2</sup> LLS 6639 serves as the practicum for Reading.

The following are requirements that go beyond any one of the options:

1. All four options require candidates to have a signed plan of study in their files in the Office of Academic Advising, B1231.
2. All four options require candidates to have a signed Master's Option Course Enrollment form in their files in the Office of Academic Advising, B1231. (Note: This form is found on page 6. For "Type of Course Work" select "Extended Course Work.")
3. Registration in any of the capstone courses (Master's Project, Master's Thesis Research, Graduate Practicum or Master's Comprehensive Exam) requires the approval of the Associate Dean.
4. Candidates who are not enrolled in any courses from their degree plan in the semester in which they are taking the Master's Comprehensive Exam must enroll in EDUC 6909 and pay the appropriate fee.
5. Before registering for Master's Project (EDUC 6839) or Master's Thesis Research (EDUC 6939), the candidate must have completed EDUC 6033 plus an additional 21 hours of approved coursework.

**GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR MASTER'S COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION**

The master's comprehensive examination option is designed to allow the candidate to take six additional hours of coursework and have a comprehensive examination replace the capstone

course experience. There is a stringent set of rules and procedures governing the comprehensive examination. The candidate should work closely with the graduate faculty advisor throughout the process of successfully completing the comprehensive examination.

Upon recommendation of the candidate's Faculty Advisor, the examination may be taken at any time after the candidate has successfully completed twenty-seven (27) hours of the candidate's program (including all program and College core courses). The candidate may apply for the comprehensive examination, as long as the candidate is in the semester/summer session in which the twenty-seven (27) hours of the candidate's program will be completed; however, the examination may not be taken until the candidate has successfully completed the required minimum twenty-seven (27) hours of the candidate's program. If the candidate is not enrolled in coursework during the semester in which the candidate is applying to take the master's comprehensive examination, the candidate must enroll in EDUC 6909 and pay the appropriate fee. No candidate will be approved to take the examination without being enrolled in a course on the approved degree plan or in EDUC 6909.

A candidate must have a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.000. Candidates must submit a new application each time they take the comprehensive examination. Applications (See page 5.) to take the examination and the dates when it will be administered are on the College of Education's website at <http://prtl.uhcl.edu/portal/page/portal/COE/Forms/Students>. The deadlines for applying and test dates are as follows:

<b>Term</b>	<b>Application</b>	<b>Test*</b>
Fall	August 10	Third Saturday in October
Spring	January 25	Third Saturday in April
Summer	May 10	Third Saturday in July

\* Test dates may change due to holidays and this information will be made available to the candidate.

An approved degree plan must be on file before the application to take the comprehensive examination can be approved. The Associate Dean will audit applications to verify eligibility to take the comprehensive examination and notify the faculty advisor and the candidate of the candidate's approval status to take the comprehensive examination.

### **The Comprehensive Examination**

The comprehensive examination will consist of questions or prompts prepared by the Comprehensive Examination Committee, which will be comprised of at least three faculty members, with the candidate's Faculty Advisor serving as chair. After reviewing the candidate's degree plan and transcript, the chair will recommend to the Associate Dean at least two other faculty members to serve as members on the committee. The Associate Dean will formally appoint the candidate's Comprehensive Examination Committee and notify the committee chair and members of their appointment.

The examination will consist of three to five questions or prompts. These questions or prompts will require candidates to synthesize and apply content knowledge and skills taught in their courses. A review packet of materials may be given to the candidates to help them prepare for the examination. The candidates will **not** be given the questions prior to the first administration

of the examination. The chair will ensure that all comprehensive examination questions are submitted to the Associate Dean's Office no later than a week prior to the comprehensive examination administration. The committee members will write the questions or prompts; the same committee members will evaluate the responses. Questions or prompts will directly reflect the required course content material.

Candidates will have six hours to respond to the questions or prompts. Candidates must bring to the examination a copy of the letter, signed by the Associate Dean, which says their application was approved and an official picture identification card. The examination period will be split into two "self-contained" 3-hour periods; that is, the questions or prompts distributed in each 3-hour session must be submitted at the end of the 3-hour session. A 45-minute break for lunch will occur between the two 3-hour examination periods. At least two questions or prompts will be handed to the candidate during the first 3-hour examination period, and the remaining question(s) or prompt(s) will be handed to the candidate at the beginning of the second 3-hour examination period. The candidate will be allowed a five-minute restroom break, when necessary; however, all materials will remain in the room and no new materials will be introduced into the room upon the candidate's return.

The examination will be administered on a computer in a classroom with computer access. Candidates may not use the Internet or their own computers and candidates may not bring any storage device to the examination. Candidates may not access any form of communication device (electronic mail, instant messaging, etc.) nor storage medium (network storage area, removable disk, etc.) throughout the examination period, except for the candidates' work saved during the examination. Failure to comply with these delineations will result in the candidate failing the entire examination. If in the very unlikely event the candidate should lose their responses, the proctors will decide if a) the candidate must still meet the time deadlines or b) the candidate's comprehensive examination should be re-scheduled. At the conclusion of the examination, candidates will save their work to the candidate's designated computer, upon which the candidate is working. The proctor will make a copy of the file before the candidate deletes the file from the computer, upon completion of the comprehensive examination. Candidates must submit a printed copy of their examination to the proctor prior to leaving the examination. Candidates are not allowed to keep a copy of the items or their responses.

### **Evaluation of the Comprehensive Examination**

The comprehensive examination evaluation rubric is as follows:

<b>Score</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
Pass	The answer addresses all or most of the key points correctly and shows an acceptable level of understanding regarding terminology and concepts. The answer may infrequently be inconsistent with the curriculum covered by the examination. Almost all statements are grammatically correct, and in complete sentences.
Fail	A number of key elements are missing or incorrect. Barely adequate knowledge of terminology and concepts. The answer addresses the questions with some statements inconsistent with the curriculum covered by the examination. Statements may include grammatical errors.

There will be at least two readers for each question. Each question will be scored by the author of the question and by the chair of the committee. The chair will select a committee member to be the second scorer of the question(s) the chair writes.

If both readers assign a “Pass” to an item, then the item grade is “Pass.” If both readers assign a “Fail” to an item, then the item grade is “Fail.” If one reader assigns a “Pass” and the other reader assigns a “Fail”, then another committee member reads the item response. The grade assigned by the third reader is the item grade. To pass the comprehensive examination, the candidate must receive a “Pass” on all items. None of the item grades are subject to appeal.

*Once the candidate receives a copy of the comprehensive examination, the candidate is considered to have taken the comprehensive examination.*

### **Notification of Results**

Faculty Advisors will notify the Associate Dean of the results (Pass or Fail) of the Master's Comprehensive Examination within two weeks of the examination's administration. The committee chair will forward the original examinations, as graded, along with the scores from each reader and each reader's comments substantiating their evaluations. The Associate Dean will notify the candidate via their UHCL email account (copying the committee) within one month of the exam administration. Should the student no longer have a UHCL email account, the results will be sent by mail. We cannot use the candidates' personal email accounts.

### **Retaking the Examination**

If a candidate does not pass one or more questions on the examination the first time, the candidate may re-apply to take those content areas' questions again. The candidate may request a second comprehensive examination the following semester.

A candidate retaking the examination will not receive the same questions as were received during a prior comprehensive examination. If the examination is failed a second time, the candidate may petition the Comprehensive Examination Appeals Committee, which is comprised of the candidate's faculty advisor, the program coordinator and the program area chair (in cases where an individual serves multiple roles, the COE Associate Dean will appoint a third member to the committee) to be administered the examination a third and final time. All committee members must approve the petition, which must be attached to the Master's Comprehensive Exam Application. **Under no circumstances will a candidate be allowed to take the comprehensive examination a fourth time.** A candidate will only need to retake those content area questions for which the candidate received a score of “Fail.”

University of Houston-Clear Lake  
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

# MASTER'S COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION APPLICATION

FALL \_\_\_\_\_ (Yr)  
(Due August 10)

SPRING \_\_\_\_\_ (Yr)  
(Due January 25)

SUMMER \_\_\_\_\_ (Yr)  
(Due May 10)

*In the event that the application deadline falls on a weekend or University holiday, applications will be accepted on or before the close of business on the following workday. The University offices are open during student spring break. Mailed applications must be postmarked by August 1<sup>st</sup> for Fall, November 21<sup>st</sup> for Spring and May 1<sup>st</sup> for Summer.*

*You must meet all graduate comprehensive examination entry requirements and also be formally accepted by letter into the College of Education graduate program and have the corresponding degree plan or certification plan on file in the COE before the application deadline for graduate comprehensive examination.*

**IF YOU ARE RETAKING THE EXAMINATION FOR A THIRD AND FINAL TIME, A PETITION APPROVED BY THE COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION APPEALS COMMITTEE MUST BE ATTACHED TO THIS APPLICATION.**

Yes, I will OR  No, I won't **be enrolled in courses during the semester I will be taking the exam.**  
If "No", you will be enrolled in EDUC 6909

Check your M. S. program:  Multicultural Studies in Education

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Last First Student ID

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Street City, State, Zip

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Work Home Email

**The candidate will word process their comprehensive examination on a UHCL computer. Candidates must submit a hard copy of their examination prior to leaving the examination. If there are special needs requested by the candidate, please attach a detailed description of the needs and the reason for requested accommodations.**

STUDENT SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

FACULTY ADVISOR SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

STUDENT: COMPLETE ABOVE SECTION ONLY, return to Bayou Building's Suite 1231, or mail to UHCL College of Education, 2700 Bay Area Boulevard, Campus Box 509, Houston, Texas 77058-1098.

**NO LATE APPLICATIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED.**

Associate Dean's Approval of the Committee: \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No Associate Dean Initial of Approval: \_\_\_\_\_

Audit Result: \_\_\_\_\_ Approved \_\_\_\_\_ Not Approved (Reason: \_\_\_\_\_)