Preparing For and Taking the Comprehensive Exam

Overview

A comprehensive examination, often called “comps,” is an examination that must be successfully completed by students in the Master of Science, Human Resources Management (MS – HRM) program prior to completion of the program. The exam will cover theory and concepts and the application of theory and concepts in business situations. The purpose of the comprehensive exam is to evaluate the student’s mastery of the functional areas of human resource management.

It is to be taken during the student’s last or next-to-last semester and after completion of the program’s core courses, or in conjunction with the last core course. To take the exam, the student must have a GPA at or above a 3.0. Students will be given three chances to pass the exam. The exam must be completed successfully in order to be granted your degree.

Registration Procedure

To take the comprehensive exam, students must contact the Graduate Program Manager at jdearing@tarleton.edu or 254-968-9055 at the beginning of the semester in which they plan to take the exam.

Exam Schedule

The comprehensive exam is offered every semester. Exact dates will be established at the beginning of each semester. The Graduate Program Manager will email the students who have signed up for the exam when the date has been set.

Rescheduling of the comprehensive exam will only be granted in case of extraordinary circumstances (i.e., religious beliefs, death in the family, military deployment, etc.). Rescheduling in such cases will only be done after the instructor and his/her department head have concurred that the reschedule is justified. Rescheduling requests must be received PRIOR TO the exam being administered. Any student registered for the exam and who does not participate in the exam during the scheduled time, without prior approval, will receive a failing grade.

Students with disabilities may request appropriate accommodation by contacting the Director of Student Disability Services at 254-968-9400 prior to the scheduled examination.
Preparing for the Exam

To help the students prepare for the exam, a Study Guide will be sent out approximately 30 days before the date of the exam. It will consist of approximately 20 review questions. By researching the answers to these questions you should be prepared for the exam. Test questions will be taken from the questions on the Study Guide.

Comprehensive Examination Format

The HRM comp will consist of essay questions in a proctored venue with questions selected from the core courses. The exam will consist of eight questions based on the review. You will be able to select four questions to answer from designated categories. You will not be allowed to use any notes, books, etc. The only thing you will be allowed to bring into the testing room is an ID and your keys. You will be answering the questions in a Microsoft Word format. To fully answer each question it is expected that you will write two to three double-spaced pages in 12-point font with 1” margins.

You will have three hours to complete the test. You will not be allowed to leave the room during the test.

We will be offering proctors on our Stephenville, Fort Worth, and Waco campuses. You also have the option of setting up your own proctoring site according to the guidelines set up by the Tarleton Testing Center. The website for those guidelines is http://www.tarleton.edu/CAAT/proctored-exams.html. (If you have trouble accessing this link, right click on it and tell it to “open hyperlink.”)

Grading of the Exam

The exams will be graded on a Pass/Fail basis. The graders will be appointed by the Head of the Management Department. Exams receiving a failing grade will be reviewed by an appointed faculty member taking into consideration the question content, responses and validity of the question(s) missed. Students who are unsuccessful have a maximum of three (3) attempts to pass the comprehensive exam after which time they will be removed from the program. Those failing the comprehensive exam will need to contact the Graduate Program Manager prior to the next scheduled testing date for inclusion in the examination.

Appeal of a Comprehensive Exam Score

Students failing the comprehensive exam will receive feedback on their performance. Students who fail the exam may appeal their score by using the process described in the COBA Appeals Process for Master’s Degree Comprehensive Examinations. A copy of the COBA Appeals Process may be obtained by contacting the Graduate Program Manager. The appeal must be in writing, setting forth in detail the nature of the grievance and the specific reason(s) for the appeal within seven (7) days of the official notification of the comprehensive examination results. Obtaining a passing grade in the core classes is not justification for an appeal.

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