

## Ph.D. Program in Higher Education Leadership and Policy Studies (HELPS)

### Comprehensive Exam

#### Purpose:

The Comprehensive Examination assesses students' command of: 1) HELPS theories; 2) salient practices, concepts and issues germane to higher education, generally; and 3) a doctoral-level research design knowledge base. Students can take the Comprehensive Examination after successfully enrolling in or completing 51 credits of coursework, which includes the following:

1. The core courses
2. The research courses (e.g., **you can take the Comprehensive Examination while being enrolled in HUDE 501**).
3. The Research Practicum

Students must register to take the Comprehensive Examination at least thirty days prior to the scheduled examination date and *must* complete the *Intent to Take the Comprehensive Examination* form to be considered "registered" to take the examination. This Form should be signed by the student's advisor and submitted to the Department Chairperson.

#### Instructions:

The Comprehensive Exam will consist of three questions:

1. The first question will draw upon course readings that reflect a strong acumen for pressing issue facing to MSIs or higher education that will be identified by the faculty. This response should range from 8 pages minimum to 12 pages maximum.
2. The second question will be based upon a targeted area on higher education interest (e.g., student affairs, academic affairs, athletics, institutional advancement, enrollment management) and will be practical in nature. Students will draw upon course readings to engage a complex problem within the context of MSIs or higher education. This response should range from 15 pages minimum to 18 pages maximum.
3. The third question will focus on research design. This response should range from 15 pages minimum to 18 pages maximum.

Students are required to provide well-developed scholarly responses to each of the three questions. Responses must be submitted within three weeks of receipt of the questions. Each response must adhere to the following guidelines:

1. Times New Roman, 12pt font
2. Current APA formatting (sixth edition), with proper citation and referencing of scholarly sources
3. Well-written and free of grammatical errors
4. GRE level rubric is the expectation on responses to all questions:
  - a. clearly identifies important features of the argument and analyzes them insightfully;
  - b. develops ideas cogently, organizes them logically and connects them with clear transitions;
  - c. effectively supports the main points of the critique;
  - d. demonstrates control of language, including appropriate word choice and sentence variety; and
  - e. demonstrates facility with the conventions (i.e., grammar, usage and mechanics) of standard written English but may have minor errors.

This examination is a take-home in which students will have three weeks to complete. While all questions will be weighted equally, should a student fail one question, the student will be given an opportunity to demonstrate proficiency in this area through a one hour oral defense. If a student fails two or more questions, the student will fail the exam.

### **Grading Procedures:**

Once a student submits the Comprehensive Exam, faculty will take approximately five weeks to grade the exam. Each examination question will be graded anonymously. There will be at least two independent graders for each exam question, and when there is no consensus between the first two readers, a third rater will read the question. Scores will be derived from an average of the two or three graders. Any student who fails the examination the first time will be allowed to sit for a second examination. Failure on the second examination will result in the student being dismissed from the graduate school and thus from the program. A student dismissed for this reason will not be readmitted to the Graduate School.