

Comprehensive Examination Procedures

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Teacher Education and Leadership



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Department of Teacher Education and Leadership

Comprehensive Examination Guidelines and Procedures

Comprehensive exams are administered two times per year: *fall* and *spring* terms. Students eligible to take the Comprehensive Examination must formally apply for the test on the prescribed form in the office of Graduate Studies. Students who fail to apply in a timely manner will be prohibited from sitting for the Comprehensive Examination. ***It is the candidate's responsibility to check the School of Graduate Studies website for comprehensive examination information.***

The scores of students who sit for a Comprehensive Exam without receiving prior approval from the Graduate School will be voided.

If a student fails the Comprehensive Examination, at least one semester must intervene before the second examination is given. If the student fails this examination a second time, the student will be dismissed from further graduate study.

Comprehensive exams are designed to evaluate the candidate's proficiency in the theory and practice in both the major and minor fields of the designated area of study. Before sitting for the Comprehensive Exam, students must meet the following **eligibility criteria**:

1. Obtain Regular/Full admission status.
2. Maintain a GPA of 3.00 or above.
3. Complete all required deficiency courses for the degree.
4. Complete all required courses for the degree.
5. Remove all I's, except thesis grades.
6. Remove all grades of "D" and "F" in the student's current program of study.

A student who applies to take the Comprehensive Exam must be enrolled for the entire semester in which they intend to sit for the Comprehensive Exam.

Successful completion of this exam is required for graduation, as described below.

M.S./M.Ed.

All non-thesis master's students, with the exception of students enrolled in the degree programs in Business Management & Administration and Systems & Materiel Engineering, are required to pass a written comprehensive examination.

Ed.S.

All Ed.S. students are required to pass a written comprehensive examination and write an Action Research paper.

Ph.D.

All Ph.D. students are required to write a dissertation and defend it successfully. They are also required to pass qualifying and/or candidacy examination(s) as required by the department. Eligibility requirements for these tests are defined in the departmental section of this bulletin.

Source: http://www.aamu.edu/Academics/gradstudies/Documents/Catalog_2015-2016.pdf

Examination Timeline

Due to the comprehensive nature of the exam, it is recommended that the candidates take the exam in the **last semester prior to graduation**. At this time, candidates will have completed most coursework and field experiences. Comprehensive exams are administered two times per year: *fall* and *spring* terms.

The Department of Teacher Education and Leadership will administer the comprehensive exam to candidates approved by the School of Graduate Studies. The following details the timeline for Comprehensive Exams:

Candidates refer to the [School of Graduate Studies](http://www.aamu.edu/academics/gradstudies/pages/default.aspx) website for application due date.
<http://www.aamu.edu/academics/gradstudies/pages/default.aspx>

Submit the [application for Comprehensive Exam](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1008aYqfkWjaA0moif4PR3xIDRDLIJWFG9C77-Ry97WE/viewform), located on the School of Graduate Studies website, electronically to the School of Graduate Studies by due date.
<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1008aYqfkWjaA0moif4PR3xIDRDLIJWFG9C77-Ry97WE/viewform>

School of Graduate Studies conducts Program of Study Audit. Eligibility criteria cited above **must** be met.

Students are notified of eligibility by the academic advisor.

The Department conducts orientation and programmatic breakout sessions at least two weeks prior to exam date. Candidate participation is optional. Only students on the approved list may attend the orientation and breakout sessions.

Administration of the exam is conducted in a one-day (5-hour) session. The student's academic advisor will notify students of the date and location of the exam.

The chairperson of the Comprehensive Exam Committee will submit scores to the department chairperson. The department chairperson will report results to the Dean of the School of Education; who in turn, will report results to the School of Graduate Studies.

The School of Graduate Studies will report results to students. Under no circumstances will faculty report exam results to students.

Note: The timeline from examination to student status reports is generally 4-6 weeks. Students who fail the exam should contact their academic advisor to discuss plans for retake.

(ADA) Special Accommodations

If accommodations are needed, the candidate should note the need on the Comprehensive Exam application. Alabama A & M University has developed a concept for an Access to Learning Program which provides equal access to all educational programs, and ensures compliance with applicable laws, including Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the applicable titles of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990.

The web link below of the AAMU's Special Student Services covers all student candidates who fall under ADA protections.

<http://www.aamu.edu/Academics/academicresources/sss/Pages/default.aspx>

NOTE: Please be sure to read all information and to clearly understand what your role is (as a student) to garner ADA accommodations when taking your comprehensive exam.

After viewing the ADA website, if you have additional information, contact the Office of the Special Student Services at 256-372-4263. Any possible accommodations will be provided by request from the student with special needs based on the available resources at the University. Students must submit requests for these accommodations prior to the day of the exam.

Exam Day Procedures

Candidates must arrive at the exam site 30 minutes before the exam to prepare. The examination will begin promptly at 9:00 a.m. and end promptly at 2:00 p.m., six (6) consecutive hours.

- No candidates will be allowed to enter the exam site after administration has begun.
- No time extensions will be granted for **any reason**.

For admittance, candidates must present a valid, government or university issued picture-ID. (Candidates are required to be enrolled to take the comprehensive examination, but they must make application to the School of Graduate Studies).

The candidate may abort the examination during the first thirty (30) minutes.

Candidates will be permitted to bring one (1) pre-typed hardcopy of an annotated bibliography, in APA format, of resources **printed on one-side**. No exceptions! Candidates will submit the annotated bibliography to the proctor for review upon entering the exam site, prior to being seated for the exam.

Candidates may **not** bring any materials in addition to the approved annotated bibliography when working on the exam. Prohibited materials/devices include cell phones or other personal electronic devices. Cell phones or electronic devices must be given to the test examiner before the testing starts or stored away in the candidate's personal belongings and turned off.

The candidate will use a computer provided by the department to complete the questions on the day of the examination. The written comprehensive examination will be offered in a classroom where candidates can access a Microsoft Word software program. Internet access will be prohibited during the examination.

The candidates are encouraged to use the restroom facilities before entering the exam site. All examination materials must be returned to the proctor prior to exiting the site and may be retrieved by the candidate upon return to the examination room. Absolutely no materials may be taken from the examination site. Candidates may bring a brown bag lunch to consume during the exam.

When the candidate completes the exam, he/she should raise their hand. The proctor will save the candidate's exam, using the candidate's Banner ID number **ONLY**, on the Department of Teacher Education and Leadership's Comprehensive Exam USB drive and collect the annotated bibliography.

At the end of the examination session, the proctor will collect all examination documents and secure by giving the documents (USB drive, annotated bibliography) to the chairperson of the Comprehensive Examination Committee. The candidate's name should appear on the sign-in sheet **ONLY**.

Note: Failure to adhere to exam procedures may cause a candidate to be dismissed from the testing center. It is the test examiner's decision to remove a candidate from the testing room for any behavior found to be disruptive to others or for failure to follow the exam procedures. A candidate may file a complaint with the Appeals Committee and follow the procedures if he/she feels the procedures were not followed. The evidence of the complaint is the responsibility of the candidate. No additional time will be allowed to investigate the situation and to make a decision by the test examiner.

Taking the Exam

- The questions on the examination will cover the standards set forth by the Alabama State Department of Education as related to the candidate's program of study.
- Begin each response to selected questions on a page separate from the previous question and response. In the **upper right-hand corner** of each new response page type:
 - the **area** (i.e., General, Collaborative K-6, Collaborative 6-12, etc.),
 - **question number**, and
 - **Banner ID Number**.
- **Do not type your name or any other identifying information.**
- The responses must be typed double-spaced in Times New Roman, 12-point font, with the questions for each response in bold letters typed single-spaced above the response.
- Each response must be a minimum of two pages and maximum of five pages in length. Responses will be evaluated based on components of quality, rather than length. Responses should not include a reference page. Candidates will submit the approved annotated bibliography to the proctor at the end of the exam.
- Each response must include original source in-text citations (APA 6th ed.) that are no more than 10 years old for each response. One of the in-text citations may originate from a textbook (secondary source).
- To pass the examination, you must attain a minimum score of 80% on four of the five responses.
- The exam is individual work, so the candidate may not engage in a conversation or any other form of communication with other students during the exam.

Examination Evaluation Criteria

Rubrics for scoring the examination are developed by the departmental Comprehensive Examination Committee. A minimum of two readers per examination is required for each program in each department. If there is a discrepancy in scoring between the two readers, **the chairperson of the departmental Comprehensive Examination Committee will give the response(s) in dispute to the person(s) who developed the question(s), who will decide the adequacy of the response to the question.**

If the faculty member who developed the question(s) in dispute is not available, the Comprehensive Examination Committee Chair, in consultation with the graduate faculty, will appoint another reader.

Once the examinations have been scored, the Comprehensive Examination Committee chairperson will submit the examination results to the department chairperson. The department chairperson will submit the examination results to the Dean of the School of Education. The Dean of the School of Education will submit the examination results to the Graduate School. All examination results will be provided by the

School of Graduate Studies only. Absolutely no faculty member will provide candidates with the examination results.

Alternative to the Written Graduate Comprehensive Examination

If a candidate shows a weakness in answering one question on the comprehensive examination but passes all of the other questions, the departmental Graduate Faculty Committee, along with the faculty member who submitted the examination question, *may* allow the candidate to meet with the group and respond orally to the same question. Final determination of a pass/fail score would be made following the meeting with the candidate and before submission of the examinations by the departmental Graduate Faculty Committee to the dean of the School of Education. **This request must be made within the semester in which the examination was given. (See Graduate School Policies: Policy for Retaking the Graduate Comprehensive Examination)**

Security

All examination materials are secured in the department secure files with only access by authorized personnel.

Access to Examination File by Candidate

Comprehensive exam files are confidential, containing the candidate's comprehensive exam information, and must be treated as such by University personnel. Candidates will have access to their comprehensive exam file during regular office hours. A request to review a file must be made in writing at least twenty-four (24) hours in advance, to the Chair of the Department of Teacher Education and Leadership, and the file reviewed by appointment. Under no circumstances will the candidate remove the comprehensive exam from the office area, and access to the file will be in the presence of the candidate's advisor (or a designee). The purpose of the review is not to grade the exam again, but to provide guidance regarding the topic areas. Candidates are not allowed to copy any materials, duplicate, or take pictures of their exam file. After review, the candidate may submit a letter of appeal and attach a copy of the student (candidate) complaint form to challenge the pass/fail result.

The forms should be submitted to the chair of the department located in room 207 in Carver Complex North Hollins Wings (CCN) during office hours.

Access to Examination by University Personnel

The candidate's advisor, the program's Appeals Committee, program coordinator, department chair, Dean of the College of Education, Humanities and Behavioral Sciences, School of Graduate Studies personnel, Teacher Resource Center personnel, Field Experience Center personnel, Vice-Presidents of the University, President of the University, Alabama State Department of Education committees/teams, accreditation review committees, and the University's legal advisors have access to the comprehensive exam files without written notice given to the candidate.

Appeals on Disciplinary and Procedures of the Comprehensive Exam

Department personnel will adhere to academic policies to render a final comprehensive exam score within a timely manner, following the School of Graduate Studies timeline to report final results of the comprehensive exam for the current semester.

After receiving the pass or fail results from the School of Graduate Studies, a candidate may wish to file for an appeal. An appeal can only be filed if there is a discrepancy in the report from the graduate office and the reporting from the department.

Step 1: Forms & Timelines

The candidate will write a letter and attach the original copy of the Student Compliant Form. The appeal must be filed within 24 hours of receiving the results from the School of Graduate Studies. All spaces and blanks on the Student Compliant Form must be complete before the form will be reviewed by the Appeals Committee.

Step 2: Notifying the Department of an Appeal

The candidate will deliver the documents to the secretary in the Department of Teacher Education and Leadership, located in room 207 Carver Complex North Hollins Wing (CCN), during regular office hours. The secretary will note the date and time of receipt of the documents on the form and place her initials.

Step 3: Faculty Appeals Committee

After the Appeals Committee receives the letter for the appeal and the Student Compliant form, is attached, the committee will meet to review the comprehensive exam file within five days. The Appeals Committee will consist of at least 2 department faculty members and 1 faculty member from the College of Education, Humanities, and Behavioral Sciences. The Appeals Committee is assigned by the program coordinator (or designee). The program coordinator (or designee) will notify the candidate of the Appeal's Committee decision in writing. A formal letter will be delivered through the U.S. Postal Services to the candidate of the Appeal's Committee decision. The candidate may request to pick-up the letter from the main office (room 207/CCN). If the candidate selects to pick-up the letter from the main office, a signature form will be required. Documentation of contact with the candidate will be kept in the candidate's comprehensive exam file. A copy of the Appeals Committee decision will be added to the candidate's comprehensive exam file.

Step 4: Department Chair – Teacher Education and Leadership

If the candidate feels his/her complaint has not been resolved, he/she may request a review by the department chairperson. It is the candidate's responsibility to provide evidence to the department chair of the complaint. The candidate should submit the appeal's letter to the Chair within 48 hours of the Appeal's Committee decision. The department head (or designee) shall review the exam file and the recommendation from the Appeal Committee to make a determination regarding the appeal. The department chair will independently review the complaint and either support the original decision or provide an alternative resolution. The decision of the department chair will be final for the appeal of the comprehensive exam. The department chair (or designee) will make a final decision within a timely manner.

Step 5: If the candidate feels his/her issue has not been resolved by the department chair, the candidate may follow the University's procedures for filing a complaint. (Complaint form attached)

Storage/Maintenance

The department chair will file the exam envelopes in the Comprehensive Exam file cabinet and place the records in an electronic folder. The files will be saved, stored, and locked for the next accreditation or state review.

Exam Scoring

- The comprehensive exam is reviewed and scored by university faculty using an evaluation rubric. The score will determine whether or not the candidates pass the exam. *See program guidelines for additional program-specific scoring information.*

Preparing for the Exam

Program of study coursework serves as the basis of exam content. Candidates should contact their advisors for assistance in preparing for the comprehensive examination. Assistance provided by the program faculty may include distributing sample questions, offering study tips, scheduling study sessions, and so forth. Candidates are encouraged to review handouts, notes, and textbooks from each of his/her classes. The test questions require that the candidates demonstrate broad knowledge of the field based on both theoretical concepts and practical implementation. Answers to the essay questions should be direct and concrete.

Early Childhood and Elementary Education

Master's Degree and Educational Specialist Degree

The Comprehensive Exam is composed of test items from the Foundation/Core courses and from the specialty area (teaching field). The Foundation/Core consists of content in which each candidate is exposed to during his or her graduate studies in the College of Education at Alabama A & M University.

The candidate will select one question from the four core curriculum subjects and one from the teaching field. A total of five questions will be completed in a four to five hour period on the day of the assessment. The Comprehensive Exam will be administered in one day.

Early Childhood and Elementary Education

Foundation/Core – Alternative Fifth Year Master's Certification

(30 Teaching Field Courses/15 Educational Courses) 42-45 Credit Hours for Completion

1. FED 501 Foundation of Education
2. FED 504 Evaluation of Teaching and learning
3. FED 521 Multicultural Education
4. FED 529 Comp-Based Instructional Technology

Foundation/Core Traditional Master's Degree

(18 Teaching Field Courses/15 Education Courses) 30-33 Credit Hours for Completion

1. FED 500 Foundation of Education
2. FED 503 Introduction to Educational Research
3. FED 529 Comp-Based Instructional Technology
4. ECE 521 Research in Elementary and Early Childhood

Content Areas Elementary Education Alternative and Traditional Master's Certification

1. ELE 519 Elementary School Curriculum
2. ELE 509 Evaluation in Elementary Schools
3. ECE 520 Foundations of Teaching Reading

Content Areas Elementary Education Alternative and Traditional Master's Certification

1. ELE 519 Elementary School Curriculum
2. ELE 509 Evaluation in Elementary Schools
3. ECE 520 Foundations of Teaching Reading
4. ECE 514 Basic Skills

Content Areas Early Childhood Education Traditional Master's Certification

1. ECH 506 Curriculum Design
2. ECE 520 Foundations of Teaching Reading
3. ECH 517 Theory, Methods, and Materials

Content Areas Early Childhood Education Alternative and Traditional Master's Certification

1. ECH 506 Curriculum Design
2. ECE 520 Foundations of Teaching Reading
3. ECH 517 Theory, Methods, and Materials
4. ECE 514 Basic Skills

Terms and Concepts

The terms and concepts below may be used to assist candidates with preparing for the comprehensive examination. The study concepts listed are examples only and are not intended to be an exhaustive reference for preparation purposes. Also the placement of the terms under a specific category does not dictate the relevance or irrelevance to other areas of the examination.

Foundations

John Locke	Public Law 99-142
Jean Jacques Rousseau	Public Law 504
Friedrich Wilhelm Froebel	Public Law 94-142
Sigmund Freud	Public Law 101-136
Abraham Maslow	First Amendment
Erik Erikson	Fifth Amendment
Jean Piaget	Fourth Amendment
Lev Vygotsky	Fourteenth Amendment
Jerome Brunner	Paradigm
Howard Gardner	Philosophy
Albert Bandura	Method
Urie Bronfenbrenner	Theory
B.F. Skinner	Schema
Constructivist Theory	Back-to-Basics Curriculum
The Progressive Education Movement in the U.S.	Social Learning Theory
Zone of Proximal Development	Cooperative Learning
Ecological System's Theory	Inquiry-Based Learning
Scaffolding	Differentiated Instruction
Response to Intervention	Gradual Release of Responsibility
Direct Instruction	

Technology

Technology integration
Paradigm change
Interaction, interactivity
Net-worked interaction
Technology facilitated learning environment
Methodology
ASSURE model of instructional design
Software and hardware
Technology-aided learning resources
Collaboration and cooperation
Computer interface
Multimedia
Animation and cognition
Benefit and downside

Integration models
New Format of Learning
Human-machine interaction
Distance education
Instructional design with technology
Strategy
Cone of experiences
Online Learning Resources
Facilitator
Drill & practice
One-to-many tutorial
Digital portfolio
Integration and learning style
Wireless technology

Assessment

Formative Assessment
Summative Assessment
High-Stakes Testing
Education Reform
Alabama Course of Study (ALCOS)
Common Core State Standards
Response to Intervention (RTI)
Norm-Referenced Tests
Standardized Tests

Criterion-Referenced Tests
Learning Objectives
Revised Bloom's Taxonomy
Performance-Based Assessments
Measures of Central Tendency
Validity
Reliability
Progress Monitoring

Diversity

Giftedness
English as a Second Language (ESL)
Individual Education Program (IEP)
Multiple Intelligences
Social

English Language Learners (ELL)
Inclusion
Bilingualism
Learning Styles

Scores on the Test

The foundation courses will comprise 80% of the final score and the Specialty (teaching field) area will comprise 20% of the final score. The minimum score for each test area is 80%.

- All concepts/topics on the assessment in the specialty areas are taken from the Alabama State Department of Education's Course of Study (ALEX).
- All questions will be scored by program faculty using the comprehensive exam rubric. The final score for each response is the average of the two scores. If there is a concern about a rating of a score, the chair of the department may request a third person to score that section of the exam.

Secondary Education

Master's Degree and Educational Specialist Degree

Development of Test Questions & Scoring (Format)

The Comprehensive Exam is composed of test items from the Foundation/Core courses and from the specialty area (teaching field). The Foundation/Core consists of content in which each candidate is exposed to during his or her graduate studies in the College of Education at Alabama A & M University. Candidate will address the objectives in his or her specialty teaching field/major area from the Alabama Course of Study: Biology, General Science, Chemistry, Physics, Mathematics, English Language Arts, General Social Studies, Agriscience Education, Business/Marketing Education, Career Technologies, Family and Consumer Science Education, and Technical Education. The candidate will select one question from the four core curriculum subjects and one from the specialty area. A total of five questions will be completed in a four to six-hour period on the day of the assessment. The Comprehensive Exam will be administered in one day.

Foundation/Core Areas – Alternative Fifth Year Master's Certification

(30 Teaching Field Courses/15 Educational Courses) 42-45 Credit Hours for Completion

1. FED 501 Foundation of Education
2. FED 504 Evaluation of Teaching and learning
3. FED 521 Multicultural Education
4. FED 529 Comp-Based Instructional Technology

Foundation/Core Traditional Master's Degree

(18 Teaching Field Courses/15 Education Courses) 30-33 Credit Hours for Completion

1. FED 500 Foundation of Education
5. FED 503 Introduction to Educational Research
6. SED 527 Guided Learning in Secondary Education
7. FED 529 Comp-Based Instructional Technology

Specialty/Teaching Field (ALCOS) or Questions Requested from Specialty Area

1. Biology
2. General Science
3. Chemistry
4. Physics
5. Mathematics

6. English Language Arts
7. Social Studies
8. Agriscience Education – Question requested from specialty area/scored by specialty area
9. Business/Marketing Education – Question requested from specialty area/scored by specialty area
10. Career Technologies – Question requested from specialty area/scored by specialty area
11. Family and Consumer Science Education
12. Technical Education – Question requested from specialty area/scored by specialty area

Scores on the Test

The foundation courses will comprise 80% of the final score and the Specialty (teaching field) area will comprise 20% of the final score. The minimum score for each test area is 80%.

- All concepts/topics on the assessment in the specialty areas are taken from the 7-12 grades of the Alabama State Department of Education’s Course of Study (ALEX).
- The Secondary Education program proctor may request one question from the specialty areas of Biology, General Science, Chemistry, Physics, Mathematics, English Language Arts, General Social Studies, Agriscience Education, Business/Marketing Education, Career Technologies, Family and Consumer Science Education, and Technical Education to be placed on the test. After the exam, the Secondary Education Proctor may request for a specialty area faculty member to score the specialty question using the comprehensive exam rubric.
- All questions will be scored by program faculty using the comprehensive exam rubric. The final score for each response is the average of the two scores. If there is a concern about a rating of a score, the chair of the department may request a third person to score that section of the exam.

Terms and Concepts

The terms and concepts below may be used to assist candidates with preparing for the comprehensive examination. The study concepts listed are examples only and are not intended to be exhaustive reference for preparation purposes. Also the placement of the terms under a specific category does not dictate the relevance or irrelevance to other areas of the examination.

Foundations

Jean Piaget	Howard Gardner
Erik Erikson	Albert Bandura
B.F. Skinner	E.L. Thorndike
Abraham Maslow	Lev Vygotsky
Sigmund Freud	John Locke
Jean Jacques Rousseau	Friedrich Wilhelm Froebel
Albert Binet	Jerome Brunner
Nation at Risk (Regan Administration)	Goals 2000(Clinton Administration)
Leave No Child Behind (George W. Bush Administration)	Public Law 94-142
Public Law 99-142	Public Law 101-136
Public Law 504	First Amendment
Fourth Amendment	Fifth Amendment
Fourteenth Amendment	Summerhill
Constructivist Theory	Back-to-Basics Curriculum
The Progressive Education Movement in the U.S.	Social Learning Theory
Zone of Proximal Development	Method
Philosophy	Theory

Paradigm
Scaffolding
Socialized Recitation/Direct Instruction

Schema
Cooperative Learning

Technology

Technology integration
Paradigm change
Interaction, interactivity
Net-worked interaction
Technology facilitated learning environment
Methodology
ASSURE model of instructional design
Software and hardware
Technology-aided learning resources
Collaboration and cooperation
Computer interface
Multimedia
Animation and cognition
Benefit and downside

Integration models
New Format of Learning
Human-machine interaction
Distance education
Instructional design with technology
Strategy
Cone of experiences
Online Learning Resources
Facilitator
Drill & practice
One-to-many tutorial
Digital portfolio
Integration and learning style
Wireless technology

Assessment

Formative Assessment
Summative Assessment
High-Stakes Testing
Education Reform
Alabama Course of Study (ALCOS)
Common Core State Standards
Response to Intervention (RTI)
Norm-Referenced Tests
Standardized Tests

Criterion-Referenced Tests
Learning Objectives
Revised Bloom's Taxonomy
Performance-Based Assessments
Measures of Central Tendency
Validity
Reliability
Accuracy and Error

Diversity

Giftedness
English as a Second Language (ESL)
Individual Education Program (IEP)
Multiple Intelligences

English Language Learners (ELL)
Inclusion
Bilingualism
Learning Styles

Special Education

Master's Degree and Educational Specialist Degree

Collaborative Teaching Programs

ECSE, Grs. K – 6, Grs. 6 – 12

Class “A” and “AA” Levels

Purpose of the Graduate Comprehensive Examination

The Special Education Collaborative Teacher Programs' comprehensive examination is designed for candidates in the Class “A” and “AA” program of study upon successful completion of the competencies required in their plan of study. The examination is designed to evaluate the effectiveness of the candidate's preparation for teaching students with disabilities in inclusive general education settings. Topics covered during the candidate's matriculation through their planned degree program are reflective of the candidate's familiarity with the knowledge-base of educational principles, professional considerations, students' characteristics, issues of diversity, assessment procedures, research-based instructional practices, service delivery, transitioning practices, and curriculum. In addition, issues pertaining to litigation, legislation, and advocacy are also emphasized.

Development of the Graduate Comprehension Examination

There are a total of six (6) question sets, with each set providing three (3) questions from which candidates must select one to answer. The development of the examination items shall be around two sections: the specialty subject area and the core curriculum requirement area. The specialty area will have two question sets, typically focused on the curriculum and assessment methodologies for that major area. The core curriculum area questions will consist of four question sets: technology, diversity (i.e., multicultural issues, special education, learning styles, etc.), foundations in education, and research and statistics. Every candidate in the School of Education will have the same core curriculum question sets. Out of the eighteen (18) total questions, the candidate will answer a total of six (6), two (2) in the specialty subject area and four (4) in the core curriculum area. Each graduate faculty who submits questions for the comprehensive examination will prepare an appropriate answer to the question(s) submitted, the course title from which the question was extracted, and the objective on the syllabus from the course which correlates to the question. All questions should be formatted to elicit an essay answer.

Preparation for the Graduate Comprehensive Examination

Successful completion of knowledge and understanding of the principles and issues related to instructional practices in inclusive general education settings. It is beneficial to the candidate to become

familiar with the current issues relating to the principles of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA) and how litigation, legislation, and advocacy influenced the development of research-based instructional practices to facilitate service delivery for children with disabilities in inclusive settings.

1. Read current researched-based publications:

Special Education

- Exceptional Children*
 - Journal of Special Education*
 - Teaching Exceptional Children*
 - Beyond Behavior*
 - Teacher Education and Special Education*
 - Learning Disabilities Research and Practice*
 - Behavior Disorders*
2. Examine pertinent lawsuits and issues relating to servicing the needs of children with disabilities. Example(s):
 - Doe vs. Whithers - a general education teacher who refused to make accommodations for an included student with a disability;
 - Larry P. vs. Riles – the use of a single IQ score for the labeling and placement of students in special education classes;
 - Diana vs. Board of Education – Placement of minority students in special education without regard to cultural and / or language differences;
 - Lee vs. Macon - Overrepresentation of minorities in special education settings.
 3. Examine disciplinary procedures for students with disabilities. Review the literature on zero tolerance, functional behavioral assessment and / or manifestation determination;
 4. Familiarize yourself with the Special Education Process (i.e., timelines, referral, pre-referral intervention, Building Based Student Support Team (BBSST), Individual Education Plan (IEP) development);
 5. Examine IDEA 2004 (i.e., parental involvement, IEP development, discipline procedures, involvement in the general education curriculum, state-wide and district-wide testing, manifestation determination);
 6. Review the literature on Tort Liability and the role and responsibilities of teachers;
 7. Examine the philosophical underpinnings and basic principles on which the concepts of Inclusion and Full Inclusion are based;
 8. Examine research-based approaches to designing learning strategies appropriate for students with disabilities in inclusive education setting (i.e., thematic units, content area instruction, cooperative teaching, etc.).

Graduate Collaborative Teacher Program Competencies

Topics covered in each category are provided as follows:

I. Education Principles and Professional Consideration

- A. Principles of child development including theories of intelligence, constructivism, behaviorism, cognitive processing, physical, social, and emotional development.
- B. Issues of litigation, legislation, and advocacy regarding the rights of students and their parents to a “free appropriate public education” (FAPE).

II. Familiarity of Students with Disabilities

- A. Understanding of the source(s) of the accepted definition(s) recognized categories of exceptionalities as defined by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA).
- B. Understanding the basic characteristics of the thirteen (13) recognized categories of exceptionalities as defined in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA).
 - Autism
 - Deaf-Blindness
 - Deafness
 - Emotional Disturbance
 - Hearing Impairment
 - Intellectual Disability
 - Multiple Disabilities
 - Orthopedic Impairment
 - Other Health Impairments
 - Specific Learning Disability
 - Speech or Language Impairment
 - Traumatic Brain Injury
 - Visual Impairment
- C. Causation and environmental factors contributing to the onset and/or development of disabilities.

III. Knowledge of Assessment Principles and Practice

- A. Basic concepts of measurement, standardized testing procedures, types of norm-referenced, criterion-referenced, and teacher-made assessments.
- B. Nondiscriminatory evaluation issues and procedures as delineated by the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (i.e., district-wide and state-wide assessments, modifications/accommodations, etc.).
- C. Eligibility and placement issues relevant to assessment guidelines for determining students’ eligibility for special education and related services.

- D. Familiarity with the Special Education Process (i.e., referral, BBST, pre-referral interventions, non-discriminatory evaluation, MEDC, timelines, and IEP development).

IV. Service Delivery and Related Services

- A. The Regular Education Initiative and the concepts of Inclusion and Full Inclusion in ensuring a least restrictive learning environment that is appropriate for addressing the needs of students with disabilities in inclusive educational settings.
- B. The roles and responsibilities of general and special educators as collaborators in addressing the academic/social needs of children with disabilities in inclusive education settings.
- C. Knowledge of the components of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997 (IDEA) with regards to the delivery of appropriate education and related services to address the needs of students with disabilities in inclusive education settings.
- D. Knowledge of the continuum of options available to appropriately address the academic and social needs of students with disabilities.

V. Curriculum and Instruction

- A. Knowledge of determining students' current functional ability, level of performance, instructional needs, and learning strategies utilizing the diagnostic-prescriptive approach to program implementation.
- B. Knowledge of behavior / classroom management techniques for fostering a positive, supportive learning environment to enhance the students' self-esteem and motivation for learning.
- C. Knowledge of teachers' role and responsibilities to ensure the rights of students with disabilities and their parents to a "free appropriate public education (FAPE)."
- D. Knowledge of curriculum related resources and instructional best practices.

Sample Core Curriculum Examination Study Questions

Core Curriculum Question #1:

Discuss ways that teachers can support the needs of students who are at risk for school failure. How can teachers identify these students? What kinds of curricular and environmental modifications can be made to support their needs?

Core Curriculum Question #2:

Leaders in the field of special education have an obligation to promote theory, research, and best education practice. Identify and describe the top 3-5 pieces of research in the area(s) of instructional and behavioral management that you feel have (should have) the greatest impact on the practice of teachers. Provide cogent arguments to substantiate your choices.

Sample Major Area Examination Study Questions

Collaborative Teaching Early Childhood Special Education

Early Childhood Special Education Question #1:

You have been assigned to work collaboratively with a general education teacher of preschool-aged students. After you assess student knowledge and performance, you find that four of the Spanish-speaking students with disabilities do not know the alphabet from memory, cannot recognize specific letters of the alphabet, and understand few, if any concepts of print. Seven of the English-speaking students without an IEP have similar challenges. What teaching strategies, accommodations, and modifications will you implement to address students' learning needs relative to their specific learning style? How will you work with the partner teacher to deliver content-related instruction which is consistent with the Alabama Course of Study?

Early Childhood Special Education Question #2:

One of your colleagues has a student in their preschool classroom identified with a severe hearing impairment and ADHD. The teacher comes to you for advice about how to include the student in the state-mandated assessments for reading and mathematics. What resources, activities, and experiences will you suggest for the teacher to implement in the classroom to address the needs of the student? How will they be integrated into the curriculum for effective use?

Collaborative Teaching Grades K - 6

Collaborative Teaching Grades K - 6 Question #1:

(a) Name three of the biggest obstacles that teachers face when planning for an academically diverse class. (b) Develop a plan of action to address one of these areas if you were the teacher facing one of these obstacles. Be sure to include:

- Action Steps: What will be done?
- Responsibilities: Who will do it?
- Timeline: By when? (day/month)
- Resources: Resources available, and resources needed (financial, human, etc.)
- Potential barriers: What individuals might resist, and how?
- Communications Plan: Who is involved? What methods? How often?

Collaborative Teaching Grades K - 6 Question #2:

The data collected through the RTI methodology can provide the special education team with important information that was not necessarily provided in older models of special education. What are some important questions about students that can now be easily answered by the RTI model (please provide at least two)?

Collaborative Teaching Grades K-6 Question #3:

Discuss the importance of stating target behaviors in observable and measurable terms. Give examples of behaviors stated in observable and non-observable ways. Describe the four elements of well-stated behavioral objectives, using examples from behaviors observed in both classroom and home settings.

Collaborative Teaching Grades 6 - 12

Collaborative Teaching Grades 6 - 12 Question #1:

Flexer et al. (2013) have identified nine (9) best practices in transition programs for students with disabilities on the secondary level. Identify five (5) of the best practices for transition programming on the secondary level and discuss each in detail.

Collaborative Teaching Grades 6 - 12 Question #2:

Identify a curricular area from the Alabama Course of Study for a particular grade level (i.e., 9th grade) and list one to three instructional goals within the curriculum. Describe how you would plan instruction to address the goal(s) for a student who has been identified as having a specific learning disability in the areas of reading and written expression, and is currently reading on the third-grade level. How would you implement your plan to address the needs of the student in the general education classroom?

Collaborative Teaching Grades 6-12 Question #3:

Murawski and Swanson (2001) reviewed the literature on co-teaching and found very little empirical evidence on the influence of co-teaching for student outcomes. Why do you think it is so difficult for researchers to measure the impact of co-teaching on student outcomes? How might teachers interested in co-teaching convince administrators that such an evaluation is a worthwhile endeavor? What might be key elements in a reasonable evaluation design?

Forms and Rubrics

College of Education, Humanities and Behavioral Sciences

Student Complaints: Handling and Resolution
adopted from

Climb "The Hill" to Success at Alabama A & M University

Policy Statement

Alabama A & M University (AAMU) is committed to continuous improvement of its non-academic and academic support services for its students. Effective complaint resolution processes provide AAMU with valuable opportunities to analyze recurring or persistent problems and ensure continuous development and improvement of student services and satisfaction. Whenever possible, AAMU is committed to dealing with complaints at the local level (within the confines of the University). The complaints policy and procedures are aligned with the student handbook, "Climb The Hill to Success at Alabama A & M University (pages 19 -22).

Process Summary

<p>Step 5 If satisfactory resolution has not been obtained at this point, the student can submit a written appeal to appropriate vice president who will hear the complaint and render a decision based on all the evidence presented. The President of the University may only overturn this decision.</p>	<p align="center">Complaint</p>	<p align="center">Resolution</p> <p>___ NO Further Action Required ___ Further Action Required Recommendation/Decision:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Signature - Student</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Signature - Provost</p>
<p>Step 4 If satisfactory resolution has not been reached at this point, the student should submit a written appeal to the Graduate Dean or the appropriate Associate Provost (one or the other but not two persons at this level) who will hear the complaint and render a decision based on all the evidence presented and pertinent to this complaint.</p>	<p align="center">Complaint</p>	<p align="center">Resolution</p> <p>___ NO Further Action Required ___ Further Action Required Recommendation/Decision:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Signature - Student</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Signature – Graduate Dean of Appropriate Associate Provost</p>
<p>Step 3 If satisfactory resolution has not been obtained at this point, the student can submit a written appeal to the Dean of the College of Education, Behavioral Sciences and Humanities who will hear the complaint and render a decision based on all the evidence presented.</p>	<p align="center">Complaint</p>	<p align="center">Resolution</p> <p>___ NO Further Action Required ___ Further Action Required Recommendation/Decision:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Signature - Student</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Signature – Dean, College of Education, Humanities and Behavioral Sciences</p>
<p>Step 2 The student who feels that their complaint has not been satisfactorily resolved can request a review by the department chairperson. Chairpersons will independently review the complaint and either support the original decision or provide an alternative resolution.</p>	<p align="center">Complaint</p>	<p align="center">Resolution</p> <p>___ NO Further Action Required ___ Further Action Required Recommendation/Decision:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Signature - Student</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Signature – Department Chairperson</p>
<p>Step 1 When a problem or issue arises, the student should first meet with his/her instructor. Students have three options for proceeding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Take no further action <input type="checkbox"/> Make comments or suggestions regarding the issues, or <input type="checkbox"/> Make a formal complaint (see step two above) 	<p align="center">Complaint</p>	<p align="center">Resolution</p> <p>___ NO Further Action Required ___ Further Action Required Recommendation/Decision:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Signature - Student</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Signature – Instructor/Faculty Member/Staff Member</p>

COMMENTS: _____

REFLECTIONS: _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Signature _____ Date _____

College of Education, Humanities, and Behavioral Sciences
 Department of Teacher Education and Leadership
 Scoring Rubric for Instructional Strategies Area

Early Childhood, Elementary Education, Secondary Education, and Special Education Traditional and Alternative Masters Program Comprehensive Exam

AAMU ID Number:

Question #:

Committee Member:

Date:

Record the score for each category on the scoring line. Each student's performance will be scored in four categories: Understanding of Questions (20%), Response to Questions (50%), Support (20%), and Organization/Language (10%). The committee's ranking will be based upon a four-point scale (4 = Strong 3 = Acceptable, 2 = Marginal, 1 = Unacceptable). To successfully pass the exam, a minimum score of "Strong" (4) is required in at least one of the following areas: Understanding of Questions; Response to Question; Support. A score of 80% is required to pass the examination.

	Understanding of Question 20%	Response to Question 50%	Support 20%	Organization/Language 10%
4 Strong	Responds incisively and directly to the questions asked. Critical reflection and/or analysis is demonstrated in response.	Responses to questions are specific, defensible, and complex. Responses adequately address all components of question in the manner requested. Content demonstrates writer's awareness of subject's complexities.	Provides substantial, well-chosen evidence (research or textual citations) used strategically. Examples are provided to facilitate explanations.	Response is coherent, logically ordered with apt and precise diction, syntactic variety, and a clear command of Standard English; contains an introduction, a body, and a concluding paragraph that summarizes previously stated thoughts. Transitions between sentences and paragraphs are clear. Very few grammar, punctuation, or spelling errors.
3 Acceptable	Most responses are direct and relevant to the questions asked. Critical reflection and analysis of topic is apparent.	Responses to question are more general, but still accurate; analyses go beyond the obvious. Most components of the question are addressed in the manner requested. Content mostly demonstrates writer's awareness of subject's complexities.	Provides sufficient and appropriate evidence and, makes effort to contextualize it. Some examples are provided to facilitate explanations.	Responses contain distinct units of thought in paragraphs, coherently arranged; occasional weakness in transitions between sentences, paragraphs or thoughts. Introduction, body, and concluding paragraphs are present. Some mechanical difficulties; occasional problematic word choices or awkward syntax errors; occasional grammar, punctuation, and spelling errors; some wordiness.
2 Marginal	Responds to the questions asked; occasionally responds with unrelated information. Some critical reflection is apparent.	Responses to questions are overly general and disorganized; may have some factual, interpretive, or conceptual errors. Some components of the question are addressed in the manner requested. Content somewhat demonstrates writer's awareness of subject's complexities.	Provides some evidence but not always relevant, sufficient, or integrated into the response. Examples used may not always support explanations.	Responses are uneven; paragraphs sometimes effective, but others are brief, weakly unified, or undeveloped with some awkward or missing transitions between thoughts. Introduction, body, and conclusion are present; however, some parts may be disjunctive. Frequent major and minor grammar, punctuation, and spelling problems; frequent imprecise diction; wordiness; awkward syntax; repetitive sentence patterns; problems impede meaning.
1 Unacceptable	Confuses or does not understand some significant concepts in the questions asked. Critical reflection or analysis is not evident in the discussion of the topic.	Responses to questions are vague or irrelevant. Content is unrelated to question.	Evidence is absent, narrative or anecdotal and awkwardly or incorrectly incorporated.	Responses are repetitive and wandering. Organization into appropriate paragraphs is lacking. Response contains too many unrelated statements which make the answer obscure. Response is missing a proper introduction, body, or conclusion.
Score				

College of Education, Humanities, and Behavioral Sciences
 Department of Teacher Education and Leadership
 Scoring Rubric for Instructional Strategies Area

Early Childhood, Elementary Education, Secondary Education, and Special Education Traditional and Alternative Masters Program Comprehensive Exam

AAMU ID Number:

Question #:

Committee Member:

Date:

Record the score for each category on the scoring line. Each student’s performance will be scored in four categories: Understanding of Questions (20%), Response to Questions (30%), Instructional Strategies (40%), and Organization/Language (10%). The committee’s ranking will be based upon a four-point scale (4 = Strong 3 = Acceptable, 2 = Marginal, 1 = Unacceptable). To successfully pass the exam, a minimum score of “Strong” (4) is required in at least one of the following areas: Understanding of Questions; Response to Question; Instructional Strategies. A score of 80% is required to pass the examination.

	Understanding of Question 20%	Response to Question 30%	Instructional Strategies 40%	Organization/Language 10%
4 Strong	Responds incisively and directly to the questions asked. Critical reflection and/or analysis is demonstrated in response.	Responses to questions are specific, defensible, and complex. Responses adequately address all components of question in the manner requested. Content demonstrates writer’s awareness of subject’s complexities.	Instructional Strategies appropriate for learning outcome(s). Strategy based on a combination of practical; experience, theory, research and documented best practice.	Response is coherent, logically ordered with apt and precise diction, syntactic variety, and a clear command of Standard English; contains an introduction, a body, and a concluding paragraph that summarizes previously stated thoughts. Transitions between sentences and paragraphs are clear. Very few grammar, punctuation, or spelling errors.
3 Acceptable	Most responses are direct and relevant to the questions asked. Critical reflection and analysis of topic is apparent.	Responses to question are more general, but still accurate; analyses go beyond the obvious. Most components of the question are addressed in the manner requested. Content mostly demonstrates writer’s awareness of subject’s complexities.	Most instructional strategies are appropriate for learning outcome(s). Most strategies are based on a combination of practical experience, theory, research and documented best practices.	Responses contain distinct units of thought in paragraphs, coherently arranged; occasional weakness in transitions between sentences, paragraphs or thoughts. Introduction, body, and concluding paragraphs are present. Some mechanical difficulties; occasional problematic word choices or awkward syntax errors; occasional grammar, punctuation, and spelling errors; some wordiness.
2 Marginal	Responds to the questions asked; occasionally responds with unrelated information. Some critical reflection is apparent.	Responses to questions are overly general and disorganized; may have some factual, interpretive, or conceptual errors. Some components of the question are addressed in the manner requested. Content somewhat demonstrates writer’s awareness of subject’s complexities.	Some instructional strategies are appropriate for learning outcome(s). Some strategies are based on a combination of practical experience, theory, research and documented best practices.	Responses are uneven; paragraphs sometimes effective, but others are brief, weakly unified, or undeveloped with some awkward or missing transitions between thoughts. Introduction, body, and conclusion are present; however, some parts may be disjunctive. Frequent major and minor grammar, punctuation, and spelling problems; frequent imprecise diction; wordiness; awkward syntax; repetitive sentence patterns; problems impede meaning.
1 Unacceptable	Confuses or does not understand some significant concepts in the questions asked. Critical reflection or analysis is not evident in the discussion of the topic.	Responses to questions are vague or irrelevant. Content is unrelated to question.	Instructional strategies are missing or strategies used are inappropriate.	Responses are repetitive and wandering. Organization into appropriate paragraphs is lacking. Response contains too many unrelated statements which make the answer obscure. Response is missing a proper introduction, body, or conclusion.
Score				
Notes				