

**Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination in
University of British Columbia
School and Applied Child Psychology**

(Approved by SACP Faculty May 2020)

Purpose of the Comprehensive Examination

The doctoral comprehensive examination in School and Applied Child Psychology is designed to meet three objectives outlined below. These objectives are consistent with the School and Applied Child Psychology program philosophy that focuses on the development of doctoral students within a scientist-practitioner framework.

- **Demonstration of a *breadth* of knowledge in School and Applied Child Psychology.**
The comprehensive examination allows students to integrate knowledge across School and Applied Child Psychology developed from coursework and practicum experiences as well as independent readings and experiences.
- **Demonstration of *depth* of knowledge in School and Applied Child Psychology.**
The comprehensive examination provides an occasion for students to engage in synthesis and critical evaluation of knowledge in School and Applied Child Psychology. Students are required to apply their knowledge to real and hypothetical situations and synthesize, analyze, and critically evaluate material from coursework, research literature and experiences in School and Applied Child Psychology and related domains.
- **Evaluation of competencies in core areas of School and Applied Child Psychology.**
The comprehensive examination provides the School and Child Applied Psychology area faculty with a cumulative evaluation of each doctoral student's attainment of core program competencies. Successful completion of the comprehensive examination provides a demonstration that professional competencies in core areas of School and Applied Child Psychology have been attained, consistent with study and learning at the doctoral level.

Overview of the Comprehensive Examination

The comprehensive examination in School and Applied Child Psychology consists of a written psychological case report, an addendum or additional reflection paper (described below) and a comprehensive oral examination of the written documents. Details of these components are provided below. It is expected that the psychological report will be one from their doctoral practicums that has typically been completed in the period at or near the end of the student's 2nd year of program course work. Successful completion of the comprehensive examination and oral defence of the dissertation research proposal are the final requirements for admission to candidacy.

Timing of the Comprehensive Examination

The Comprehensive Examination in SACP will occur in May-June of the second year of the student's Ph.D. program. Students will submit their report and reflection (see below) to the Chair of the Examination committee by May 15th. The oral examinations will be scheduled between May 15th and June 15th. If required, any remediation will be completed by August 31st.

Comprehensive Examination Chair and Examination Committee

A. Examination Chair

Each year a Chair of the Examination Committee will be selected from the core SACP faculty. The chair position will rotate yearly. The Examination Chair will identify an examination committee for each student and distribute copies of the report and reflection to the committee. The Chair is responsible for scheduling the meeting (normally between May 15 and June 15), identifying an examination room, and inviting committee members. The Chair of the Examination Committee will chair the oral examination and will be a non-voting member of the examination committee. They will ensure the completion form is placed in the students Ph.D. file with the SACP program support.

B. Comprehensive Examination Committee

In addition to the Examination Chair the Comprehensive Examination Committee will consist of three members of the core SACP faculty, identified by the Examination Chair including: 1) the student's SACP program advisor, and 2) two additional members of the core SACP faculty.

Components of the Comprehensive Examination

A. Preparing for the Examination

Coursework and practicum experiences in the M.A. program and first two years of Ph.D. study are the foundations in preparing for the comprehensive examination. Students are informed at the beginning of their Ph.D. program that they will need to provide a blinded copy of a psychological case report from a case undertaken in their first two years of doctoral practicum.

B. Psychological Case Report

Students will select one written psychological report from the cases completed during their first two years of doctoral study. It is anticipated that this report will typically be a report from a psychological assessment but a psychological report from an intervention may be allowed with permission of the Examination Chair. The focus (e.g. psychoeducational, psychological, neuropsychological, social-emotional, behavioural) of the report is up to the graduate student. However, it should provide a strong representation of the student's breadth of training including case conceptualization, selection and use of appropriate assessment procedures, complete, accurate and appropriate interpretations and conclusions drawn from the assessment findings, application Ministry of Education eligibility and DSM-5 diagnostic procedures, and development and presentation of recommendations and relevant resources. All reports must be blinded. This includes blinding the name the client and their background information and location, the names of other professionals agencies involved in the case, and the name of the case supervisor.

C. Written Reflection to the Report

In recognition that one's thinking as a clinician evolves over time, and that the student may have a different perspective on some issues than their supervisor, the student will also provide a (maximum) 2500-word Written Reflection as an addendum to the report. This is an exercise in "Reflective Practice" and an opportunity for the student to look back on the case, provide context for the decisions made, suggest adjustments that they might make upon more reflection, or any other information that might be helpful to the reader of the report in the examination context.

D. Oral Examination

The oral examination will be scheduled for 2 hours. The first 90 minutes will involve questions from the examination committee to the student regarding the case and addendum, as a forum for examining the student across the breadth and depth of knowledge and core program competency areas outlined for students in the Ph.D. program in School and Applied Child Psychology at UBC. The last 30 minutes will be for committee in camera discussion and feedback to the student.

While the specific areas and the depth of the questions covered in the oral examination may vary with the focus of the case, students may be asked to respond to questions in the following areas in the context of their psychological case report and addendum:

- Culture and organization of schools and schooling
- Continuum of curriculum and instruction
- Systems and systems change
- Human development and learning
- Individual differences, diversity, and exceptionalities
- Research methodology and techniques of data analysis
- Psychological assessment and measurement (cognitive, academic, social-emotional, and behavioural)
- Direct, indirect, and systems level service provision
- Social, affective, cognitive, and biological foundations of behaviour
- Culturally responsive practice
- Professional, legal, and ethical issues

The following are the types of questions a student might anticipate:

Area	Exemplar Question
Cultural and organization of schools and schooling	Discuss any school or schooling considerations as you conducted this case and/or were considered as you developed recommendations?
Research methodology and techniques in data analysis	What are ways in which you would evaluate or document the effectiveness of the interventions proposed?
Human development and learning	Given the age of this client, what were important developmental considerations in planning the assessment and interventions?
Psychological assessment and measurement	What are the strengths and limitations of the measures selected for use in this context with this client?
Direct, indirect, and systems level service provision	Identify and discuss interventions at direct, indirect, and systems level for this client
Culturally responsive practice	What were key cultural considerations in conceptualizing the case?
Professional, legal and ethical issues	Identify ethical considerations or challenges that emerged as you completed this case.

Evaluation of the Comprehensive Examination

Each member of the examination committee will evaluate the exam as either pass or fail, on the basis of the following criteria, as appropriate for a given case:

- Demonstration of in-depth understanding of the chosen area(s) of focus and related knowledge and skills
- Evidence of knowledge of and competence in ethical and legal bases of professional practice
- Demonstration of knowledge and competence in skills relevant to the area under study
- Demonstration of ability to link and integrate theory/research and application/practice
- Evidence of the ability to utilize multiple frameworks to understand the origins and development of problems and their resolution in individuals and systems
- Evidence of ability to consider multiple points of view both in the study of problems and the presentation of results
- Demonstration of high standards of communication, with clear and concise written presentation utilizing APA style where relevant as well as clear and concise oral presentation.

For the comprehensive examination to be deemed a “pass”, at least two of the three committee members must support a decision of competency, based on the criteria identified above. In the event that the comprehensive examination is not deemed a “pass”, the examination committee will recommend a supplementary procedure, document the procedure in writing, and establish a timeline for completion. Students will only be given one opportunity for remediation.

Remediation Procedures

The committee may recommend remediation with or without re-examination. A remediation plan will be developed between the student and committee using the Comprehensive Examination Remediation Plan Form. The form will detail the specifics of the plan, required documentation, evaluation plan, and timelines for completion. If a re-examination is required, it will typically follow the same procedures as the initial oral examination, but may be abbreviated with consensus agreement of the student and members of the examination committee. Only one re-examination is permitted.

If the student’s remediation is not deemed acceptable (using the criteria highlighted above) the result will be a “fail” grade for the comprehensive examination. Since successful completion of the comprehensive examination is a program requirement, students who are assigned a “fail” grade on the comprehensive examination will be required to withdraw from the program. Appeals of examination results should follow the appeal procedure identified in the university calendar as “Senate Appeals on Academic Standing”.

Final Documentation

Upon successful completion of the oral examination the Comprehensive Examination Completion Form will be completed by the Examination Chair, with signatures from the members of the examining committee. They will turn in the form to the SACP Program Assistant with a week of completion of the examination who will place it in the cumulative file of the student.

Timelines

Activity	Timing
Identify a Program Comprehensive Examination Chair (rotates annually across core SACP faculty)	Annually in the summer as part of service responsibilities for the program
Identify a case	First and Second year in PhD program
Prepare blinded report and case addendum	April of 2 nd year in the PhD Program
Submit blinded report and case addendum to the Examination Chair	May 15 th of 2 nd year in the PhD Program
Chair will identify examination committee and schedule Oral Examination	May 1 st to May 15 th of 2 nd year in the PhD program
Oral Examinations	May 15 to June 15th
File Completion Paperwork	Within one week of successful completion of Oral Examination
Remediation Plan Completed (If needed)	August 31 st of 2 nd year in PhD program

SACP Comprehensive Examination Completion Form

This is to certify that _____, _____
(Name) (Student #)

has passed the Comprehensive Examination for the Ph.D. degree in School and Applied
Child Psychology in the Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology and
Special Education on _____.

Insert Date

Print Name & Add Signature & Date
Examination Committee Chair

Print Name & Add Signature & Date

Print Name & Add Signature & Date

Print Name & Add Signature & Date

Members of the Comprehensive Examination Committee

Student Print Name & Add Signature & Date

The Examination Chair should provide a brief summary of the feedback from the meeting
to attach with this document

SACP Comprehensive Examination Remediation Plan

Student: _____ **Date of Plan:** _____

Chair of Examination Committee: _____

Members of the examination Committee: _____

Completion Date: _____

Area for Remediation	Plan or Activity for the Remediation	Plan for Evaluation	Timeline for Completion

Summary of Remediation: (Pass/Fail). (Completed by the Examination Chair)