

## Family and Human Development Comprehensive Exam

The comprehensive exam provides you with an opportunity to demonstrate your understanding of theory, research methods, and integration of perspectives within Human Development and Family Studies. Listed below are examples of what your comprehensive exam may contain.

### Part 1: Theoretical Understanding of Primary Concentration (4-6 pages, double-spaced).

Example:     A. Compare and contrast theory A with theory B (The Examining Committee will select both theories within your primary specialization from the theories below).  
                   B. To justify your research question (Part 2, below), give current statistics about the incidence and trends in your topic. As appropriate, apply either theory A or B (Part 1, A) to the topic area.

<b>Human Development Theories</b>	<b>Family Relations Theories</b>	<b>MFT Perspectives</b> <i>*MFT focuses on clinical models anchored within family systems theory.</i>
Behaviorism (Skinner)	Feminist Framework	Psychodynamic Perspectives (Object Relations)
Cognitive Constructivism (Piaget)	Social Exchange and Resource Theories	Communication-Based Perspectives (Strategic, Milan, Structural)
Social Cognition (Bandura)	Symbolic Interactionism	Transgenerational Perspectives (Bowen, Contextual, Satir)
Sociohistorical (Vygotsky)	Bio-ecological (Bronfenbrenner)	Cognitive- and Behaviorally-based Perspectives
Behavioral Genetics (Plomin)	Family Stress	Emotion-based & Attachment Perspectives (Emotionally Focused, Restoration)
Ethology (Ainsworth, Bowlby)	Family Systems Theory	Social Constructionist Perspectives (Narrative, Solution Focused)
Psychosocial (Erikson)	Theorizing about Race/Ethnicity (Intersectionality, Critical Race Theories)	Integrative Perspectives (Internal Family Systems, Biopsychosocial-Spiritual)

### Part 2: Relevant Topics & Issues in Primary Concentration (4-6 pages, double-spaced).

Example: Using either theory A or B from Part 1 (your choice) as a framework, create a brief research prospectus that addresses one of the issues listed below (selected by the Examining Committee). In doing this, you will be expected to adequately define core concepts as well as demonstrate the ability to integrate and apply relevant information.

Make sure that your prospectus includes all six of the following components:

1. A **research question** that also seeks to address significant gaps in the literature.

2. Two or more **testable hypotheses** (Define your independent and dependent variables)
3. A **research design section** (Specify aspects of the research design, threats to internal validity, and how your research design controls for those threats). As part of this, you may be expected to demonstrate an understanding of:
  - Qualitative vs. Quantitative vs. Mixed designs
  - Cross-sectional vs. Longitudinal designs
  - Experimental vs. Quasi-experimental vs. Correlational designs vs Single subject
  - Specific quantitative designs, including the following:
    - Control Group Pretest-posttest design
    - Randomized Solomon Four-Four Group Design
    - Nonrandomized Control Group Pretest-Posttest Design
    - Variations of the above
4. A **sample section** (Describe your sampling process and identify strengths and weaknesses of your sampling strategy in terms of sampling bias and external validity). As part of this, you may be expected to demonstrate an understanding of:
  - Simple random sampling
  - Systematic random sampling
  - Stratified random sampling
  - Non-probability sampling
  - Cluster sampling
  - Multistage sampling
5. A **procedures section** (Outline how you will carry out your study and further address potential threats to internal validity)
6. A **measurement section** (Specify how you would go about ensuring that your measures are reliable and valid). As part of this, you may be expected to demonstrate an understanding of:
  - Self-report (questionnaire, interview) vs. Behavioral (observational, physiological, performance) vs. Archival measurement
  - Test-retest vs. Inter-rater reliability vs. Internal consistency vs. Split-half reliability
  - Various forms of validity
    - Construct
    - Content
    - Criterion
    - Face
    - Convergent
    - Discriminant
  - Types of measurement biases
7. A **proposed data analysis section** (Specify which statistical procedures could best test your hypotheses, briefly discuss interpretation and significance of findings). As part of this, you may be expected to demonstrate an understanding of:
  - Descriptive vs. Inferential Statistics
  - Statistical vs. Practical Significance
  - Terms such as effect size, statistical power, alpha level

- Foundational data analytic strategies
  - ANOVA-based
  - Regression-based
- Advanced Statistical Approaches
  - SEM
  - Longitudinal Analysis
  - Time Lag Models
  - Cohort Sequential Models
  - Nested/Dyadic Models

<b>Human Development Topics &amp; Issues</b>	<b>Family Relations Topics &amp; Issues</b>	<b>MFT Topics &amp; Issues</b>
Cohort Effects	Partner Selection	Families and Diversity
Heredity and Environmental Interaction	Cohabitation	Common Factors / Therapeutic Mechanisms of Change
Individual Differences vs. Universals	Adult Relationship Processes & Quality	Family Transition, Stress, Coping, & Resilience (Loss/Grief, Addiction, IPV, Chronic Illness, Divorce, Infidelity, Trauma)
Motivation/Mechanisms for Change	Divorce (issues for adults & children)	Systemic Therapy in Medical and Other Settings
Quantitative vs. Qualitative Change	Parent-child Relationships (Processes & Quality)	Systemic Interactions, Patterns, and Processes (relationships and therapy, includes neurobiology & neuropsychology)
Sensitive/Critical Periods of Development	Other Family Relationship Processes & Quality (sibling, intergenerational, fictive kin)	Systemic Assessment and Diagnosis
Stability vs. Plasticity		

**Part 3: Integration of Perspectives: Integrating Primary and Secondary Concentrations (2-4 pages, double-spaced).**

Example: Describe the major theoretical components of theory C (The Examining Committee will select this theory, within your secondary concentration, from the theories listed in Part 1).

Using the same topic/issue that you addressed in your research prospectus (for Part 2), apply a theory from your secondary specialization (The Examining Committee will select this theory, within your secondary concentration, from the theories listed in Part 1 above). Now, critique your research prospectus (especially sections 1-4 in your prospectus) from the theoretical perspective that you just described (theory C).