

TARLETON STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
Department of Management, Marketing and Administrative Systems
MS - Management and Leadership
MS - Human Resource Management

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, Management & Leadership (MS-M&L) and the Master of Science, Human Resource Management (MS – HRM) programs 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 management and leadership and 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 programs core courses. To take the exam, the student must be in good standing academic in his or her program (GPA at or above a 3.0 in the coursework counting toward the graduate degree). Students who do not pass the comprehensive exam may not be granted the degree.

Registration Procedure

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

Exam Schedule

Comprehensive exams are given three times a year in March/April, June/July and October/November. Exact dates will be established each semester. Contact the comprehensive exam coordinator at (254) 968-9055 or jdearing@tarleton.edu for the exact dates. Exams will normally only be given during the scheduled time.

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 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. "I forgot!" is not sufficient justification for rescheduling the

exam. 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 prepare for the exam a student should review the textbooks used in their **core management and human resource management courses**. These are *typically* courses with a MGMT prefix for MS - Management & Leadership and HRM prefix for MS - Human Resource Management. Special attention should be paid to the core textbook used in MGMT 501 Organizational Behavior for MS - M&L. For those taking the MS - HRM exam, students have found that a recent addition of a book similar to the following has proven helpful:

- Human Resource Management by Mathis and Jackson
- Human Resource Management by Gary Dessler
- Human Resource Management by Raymond Noe, John Hollenbeck, Barry Gerhart and Patrick Wright

Comprehensive Examination Format

Blackboard will be used to administer the exam. The comprehensive exam will consist of 300 multiple-choice questions. These questions will be randomly selected for each student; therefore, each student will have a different exam. Students will be given 5 hours to complete the comp. Practice questions will be available in Blackboard. The exam is open-book, but students **will not** have time to look up many answers. It is strictly prohibited for students to consult their colleagues during the exam.

Grading of the Exam

Exams which receive a grade of 70% will receive a "Pass". Exams receiving a grade of 69% or less will be reviewed by an appointed graduate business faculty. The Management, Marketing and Administrative Systems (MMAS) Department Head will appoint the grader(s). The evaluation of exams scoring less than 70% will take 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 exam coordinator prior to the next schedule administration to 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 Masters Degree Comprehensive Examinations. (A copy of the COBA Appeals Process may be obtained by contacting the departmental offices.) The appeal must be in writing, setting forth in detail the nature of the grievance and the specific reason(s) for the appeal with 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.

[Edits Rev. 9]