

## **CSD Master's Degree Culminating Experience Comprehensive Evidence-Based Practice Case Application (Comps) [Handbook Appendix 3A]**

Every master's student in the School of CSD completes the comprehensive evidence-based practice (EBP) case application examination (comps) as the culminating experience of the master's program. A "pass" is a graduation requirement.

### **Purpose**

Comps is a full-day summative assessment to ensure that a master's candidate: (1) possesses the applied knowledge and skills to develop an appropriate, comprehensive, interdisciplinary care plan, (2) can think creatively and critically, and (3) can respond flexibly to relevant questions. This format reinforces our emphasis on evidence-based decision-making by integrating the best current evidence into individualized clinical decisions.

### **Requirements for Participation**

To participate in comps students must:

1. Be concurrently participating in or have already completed their final full-time externship, AND
2. Have successfully completed all academic coursework, AND
3. Have no outstanding incompletes or unfulfilled remediation plans.

### **Case Selection**

Each student is randomly provided with a case history for a client with a complex background, requiring integration of knowledge across several courses and experiences. Each case will be written by a CSD faculty member. Students will have the option to request ahead of time their preference for a pediatric case, adult case, or no preference. All students will be informed two weeks before the comps exam day of the nature of their case (pediatric or adult). Note that the comps committee may not be able to honor every request in order to balance out the cases across faculty; this way, every student should still prepare early by reviewing all of their course material, but then can focus their preparation in the last two weeks.

The case history will provide information relevant to SLP history, medical and/or educational history, social/cultural history, and other information pertinent to the case. Cases are designed to be broad to allow for "multiple truths" and not just "one correct answer," and will require integration of knowledge across courses and competency areas.

## Required Components

There are two (2) parts to the comprehensive EPB application:

- (1) a written report to demonstrate their ability to synthesize information, summarize the best current evidence, and apply their knowledge to a complex clinical case. The report will include a summary of the relevant case information, assessment results, and a plan for treatment/management (e.g., goals, referrals) with evidence-based rationales citing primary sources in APA format.
- (2) an oral presentation will consist of a brief summary of the case and the assessment and treatment plan that was created. Faculty will ask questions to evaluate professional communication, flexibility, and critical thinking. The oral presentation will take place in small groups with fellow students so that all can learn from the other cases. Three faculty will be present in each small group to ask relevant critical-thinking questions.

## Assessment

- (1) The written report is an individual assessment and will be scored by two faculty members. The two scores are averaged.
- (2) Three faculty will be present in each small group to ask relevant critical-thinking questions; each faculty member present will score each individual oral presentation. The three scores are averaged.

Each component (written and oral) of the comprehensive exam is separately scored on a four-point scale.

1 = No Pass  
2 = Concerns

3 = Pass  
4 = High Pass

Scores for each component of comps (oral and written) are averaged between faculty graders for each student; students must obtain an average score of *at least 2.5* to be considered “passing.” A student must pass *both* the written and oral components.

In the event of a “No Pass” (scores less than 2.5 on either written or oral components), students are permitted up to two (2) additional attempts to pass each component.

After an initial no pass, students are given a second attempt at the exam component that was not passed. The student will be provided with written feedback from the graders to facilitate preparation for a second comprehensive assessment.

Students who do not pass only the written component will be given a new case and will prepare a written response in the same format with the same 4-hour time limit as in the original exam.

Students who do not pass the oral component only will be required to present their original case to a new faculty committee under the same 20 minute oral exam

conditions as the original exam (they will be given access to the details of the case one hour prior to the new oral exam).

Students who do not pass either (both written and oral) component will be given a new case with 4 hours to prepare a written response and presentation of the new case to a new orals committee under the same 20 minute oral exam conditions as the original exam. The written and oral components will be completed all in the same day (similar to the original exam process).

Students who do not pass on a second attempt will be given a third attempt at the component that they failed. They will be provided with written feedback from the graders about why they failed that component of the exam.

Students who do not pass a second attempt at written component will be given a third case and will prepare a written response in the same 4-hour time limit as in the original exam.

Students who do not pass the oral component on a second attempt will be given a new case and given 4 hours to study the case. They will prepare an oral presentation only on the new case (no written response will be required). On the same day, they will present the new case to a new faculty committee under the same 20-minute oral exam conditions as the original exam.

Students who do not pass either (both written and oral components) in the second attempt will be given a third case to respond to. They will have 4 hours to prepare a written response and will present their new case to a new orals committee under the same 20 minute oral exam conditions as the original exam. The written and oral components will be completed all in the same day (similar to the original exam process).

Any student who has not passed both components of the exam after the third attempt will be ineligible to graduate from the program and therefore dismissed from the program.

### **Scheduling**

The one-day EBP case application comps exam typically takes place in March of your second year. It is usually scheduled to occur prior to spring break and is typically scheduled early in the previous Fall semester to allow students time to plan around the date and with their externship site.

## Outline of Comps Exam Day

One full day will be set aside for this purpose. Students will be excused from full-time clinical practicum on this day.

8:00-12:00*	Students work on their own cases at an individual computer to analyze case, conduct literature review, and develop written report. All written reports due by 12:00, no exceptions.
12:00-1:00	Lunch Break (lunch provided)
1:00-5:30 (with 1 or 2 short breaks)	“Grand Rounds” oral presentations in groups. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Group 1 (up to 12 students) with 3 faculty members</li><li>• Group 2 (up to 12 students) with 3 faculty members</li><li>• Group 3 (up to 12 students) with 3 faculty members</li></ul> In random order, each student has 10 minutes to present his/her case (summary of relevant information from history, assessment, and plan), then 10 minutes for Q&A from faculty. Students in the group will remain in the room until all students have presented their cases and responded to questions. Students will be active learners as they attend to peers, and will complete an active learning worksheet to return to each presenter.
6:00-8:00	Dinner & Celebration!

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

### How can I best prepare?

Since this summative assessment is designed to be comprehensive in nature as a culminating experience in the program, students are expected to review their course notes, readings, and competencies from every required course. Faculty will provide one or two comps example cases so you know what to expect. Students are encouraged to review in study groups and to meet with faculty as questions arise. Preparation for comps is intended to also help students prepare for the national Praxis exam, which will assess knowledge in all areas of SLP practice.

### What will the written report entail?

The goal is for students to prepare a clinically relevant, written report which will include: summary of case history, summary of relevant assessment results and diagnosis, referrals if indicated, and treatment goals supported with rationales from primary sources of evidence with an emphasis on the empirical research literature; for each treatment goal, students must also explain procedures for implementation and describe a data collection plan. This report will be typed, about 6-10 pages.

### **What resources are permissible during the written component?**

Practicing clinicians need to have basic information “at their cognitive fingertips” but will also be able to access “clipboard” resources. The same will be true for comps. During the morning portion, students will have access to online resources (e.g., literature databases, Internet resources, Moodle) and whatever printed materials they bring with them (e.g., textbooks, articles, notes). However, the comprehensive exam is an individual assessment, so you may not use others as a resource. The exams will be proctored to ensure social media, cellphones, or email are not used to share ideas or information.

### **What will the oral presentation entail?**

The oral presentation is designed to ensure the student can *clearly and succinctly* summarize a case and relevant SLP findings in a team forum. Each learner in the group will have worked on a different case, so this is an opportunity for each learner in the group to review relevant information from each other’s comprehensive experience as well. The oral presentation is a brief (10 minutes or less) synopsis of the case and justification of the diagnosis and treatment recommendations. This is also an important opportunity to demonstrate competency and flexible clinical problem-solving by responding to relevant questions from faculty.

### **What if my externship is not in the Portland area?**

It is assumed that if a student’s externship is within the states of Washington or Oregon that they will come to the Forest Grove campus for comps. Please plan schedules accordingly. If the externship is elsewhere students have the option of coming to campus or doing comps at a distance. If a student chooses to do comps at a distance, they must arrange for a proctor (to be approved by the CSD comps committee) to supervise the written exam. If there are costs involved in proctoring, CSD will reimburse the student for those costs. In such cases, oral exams will be done via Skype, FaceTime, or similar electronic platform (subject to the approval of the CSD comps committee).

### **How much time off should I plan for from my externship?**

The policy of CSD faculty is that students will only take off the day of the actual comps exam. If a student has to travel a long distance (i.e., more than a 3 hour drive) to come to the Forest Grove campus, it would be acceptable to also take off the day before.

### **What if I have accommodations for academic testing?**

Accommodations are only permissible for students who are registered with Learning Support Services (LSS). Students registered with LSS will work out an agreed-upon schedule with the CSD comps committee ahead of time to best arrange for accommodations. Note that although accommodations are possible for the written portion of the exam, no accommodation will be possible for the oral component.