

LIBERTY

UNIVERSITY™

*CENTER FOR COUNSELING
& FAMILY STUDIES*

**PH.D. IN COUNSELING
QUALIFYING EXAMINATION
MANUAL**



2011- 2012

TABLE OF CONTENTS

OVERVIEW OF THE QUALIFYING EXAMINATION.....	3
1.1 The Requirement of the Qualifying Examination	3
1.2 The Purpose of the Qualifying Examination	3
1.3 The Focus of the Qualifying Examination.....	3
QUALIFYING EXAMINATION PROCEDURES	5
2.1 Registration for the Qualifying Examination	5
2.2 Administration of the Qualifying Examination	5
2.3 Evaluation Criteria.....	5
2.4 Notification of Performance	6
2.5 Policy on Retaking the Qualifying Examination	6
QUALIFYING EXAMINATION PREPARATION	7
3.1 Preparing for the Qualifying Examination	7
3.2 Performing well on the Qualifying Examination.....	7
3.3 Study Guide.....	8
APPENDIX A: QUALIFYING EXAMINATION APPLICATION.....	9
APPENDIX B: PROCTOR APPLICATION.....	10

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Overview of the Qualifying Examination

1.1 The Requirement of the Qualifying Examination

The Qualifying Examination is taken following completion of the five of the Integrative Core Courses that are listed below:

- COUC 740 – Advanced Research Design
- COUC 705 – Philosophy of Religion and the Helping Professions (or an approved elective)
- COUC 715 – Applied Counseling Theories
- COUC 730 – Issues in Integration
- COUC 745 – Intermediate Statistics and Quantitative Research

Although not required, students may also find it helpful to take COUNC 720 prior to taking the Qualifying Exam.

1.2 The Purpose of the Qualifying Examination

The purpose of the Qualifying Examination is to assess a doctoral student's abilities to analyze and evaluate empirical research from both conceptual and methodological perspectives. The examination taps broad, basic skills in research design and conceptualization and is designed to encourage students to integrate their knowledge of research methodology with substantive theoretical and empirical issues. It also serves as an early assessment of competencies that are relevant to the development of scholarly work. It tests a student's understanding and readiness to apply theories and concepts in the profession of Professional Counseling or Pastoral Care and Counseling.

1.3 The Focus of the Qualifying Examination

The Qualifying Examination consists of three essay questions. Students should be able to demonstrate knowledge of counseling theory and practice; research and statistics; and the integration of psychology and theology. Their work must reveal expert level knowledge of theory, practice, ethical issues, research, and professional issues related to counseling. All answers must have current and relevant sources cited with dates.

To prepare for the Qualifying Examination, students should be able to answer questions drawn from the Clinical Prerequisites, Theological Foundational Competencies and the content communicated in the Core Courses listed above.

1.4 Proctor Requirements

A person who meets the criteria outlined on the Proctor Application (See Appendix B) must proctor the Qualifying Examination.

Any costs associated with obtaining a proctor are the responsibility of the student. The student and the proctor must complete the Proctor Application and email it to Ester Warren (ejwarren@liberty.edu) and Dr. Sosin (lssosin@liberty.edu).

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Qualifying Examination Procedures

2.1 Registration for the Qualifying Examination

The doctoral student may take the Qualifying Examination when he or she has met all requirements as outlined in 1.1 of this manual. Students must complete the *Qualifying Examination Application* (see Appendix A) and e-mail it to Ester Warren (ejwarren@liberty.edu) and Dr. Sosin (Issosin@liberty.edu).

Any student with a verified disability that inhibits performance on this exam may arrange for the appropriate accommodation when applying for the examination. The “Americans with Disabilities Act” must cover such disability and the Office of Disability Academic Support (ODAS) in TE 127, Main Campus, must make verification of the disability.

2.2 Administration of the Examination

Students have eight (8) hours to complete the Qualifying Examination. Students may not use any reference materials during the examination (i.e., notes, books, online resources).

Students are strongly encouraged to proofread their answers. The pressure of the Qualifying Examination does not excuse errors in grammar, spelling, and composition.

2.3 Evaluation Criteria

The Qualifying Examination Grading Committee grades all examinations over a period of 6-8 weeks.

Readers might respond with feedback that includes:

- Insufficient interpretation of key problem areas
- Comprehensive knowledge not demonstrated
- Poorly written responses
- Lacking in factual information
- Lacking in supporting detail
- Did not answer the question
- Information provided was inadequate/incorrect/incomplete
- Poorly organized written response
- Lacking depth in response
- Unsubstantiated assumptions
- Unclear presentation of information

2.4 Notification of Performance

Students will receive notification of their results within eight (8) weeks via e-mail. Students who perform well on the examination will receive very little, if any feedback, outside of notification that they passed. In contrast, students who fail the examination, or an exam section, will receive specific feedback on the deficits in their performance.

2.5 Policy on Retaking the Qualifying Examination

Students who fail one or more areas of the exam must retake those areas (at the same time) no sooner than 3 months following the previous attempt. A hold will be placed on their program until they pass the Exam. Students failing twice are not permitted to move forward in the Ph.D. program. In lieu of the doctoral degree, such students are awarded the Certificate of Advanced Graduate Studies, and will be dismissed from the Ph.D. program. Students are not permitted back into the doctoral program once they have been dismissed.

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Qualifying Examination Preparation

3.1 Preparing for the Qualifying Examination

Students should develop a study schedule that allows them to spend significant time preparing for the different areas of content covered on the test. To help prepare for the Qualifying Examination, see the Qualifying Examination Study Guide below.

3.2 Performing Well on the Qualifying Examination

The following suggestions may help you maximize the quality of your examination.

1. ***Thoughtfully and thoroughly answer the question.***
2. ***Use your eight hours of time wisely.***
 - a. Carefully plan and outline each answer, devoting about 15 minutes of the allotted time for planning and outlining.
 - b. Do not spend too much time on one question
 - c. Save time to re-read and edit your exam
3. ***Response skills matter.*** Answers should reflect graduate level writing skills. Many poor responses are not well organized.
 - a. Use APA style headings to organize your paper and APA style throughout your paper.
 - b. Think out your answer before you begin writing.
 - c. Write in complete sentences. Make sure each one is clear and concise. Do not list information in outline form or with bullet points. Paragraphs should contain several coherent sentences and should develop one complete thought.
 - d. Answers should be factual (supported by known facts on the subject), well stated (organized and presented in a reasonable manner), and logical (sequencing of items; follow a logical pattern).
 - e. If you have time, carefully proof read your work before submitting it.
 - f. Emphasize quality rather than quantity in the answer, but be thorough.
 - g. Limit your summary or conclusions to one paragraph. Do not include new material in your conclusions.

3.3 Study Guide

- a. **Integration:** Be able to articulate the role and function of integration in clinical practice. Be prepared to describe and defend a holistic model that includes a thorough knowledge of relevant principles related to both theology and counseling/psychology.
- b. **Research:** Be prepared to create an EXPERIMENTAL study from start to finish that includes all of the essential elements and considerations necessary for scholarly,

quantitative research. Additionally, be prepared to demonstrate clear understanding of the essential elements and considerations necessary for scholarly, qualitative research.

- c. Theory: Be prepared to take a responsibly eclectic (integrative) approach to the delivering of therapeutic interventions applied to a clinical case study including ethical and effective assessment, case conceptualization, multi-axial diagnosis, treatment planning and empirically supported treatment for a variety of DSM conditions.

3.4 Suggested Reading

Review all of the primary texts, journal articles, notes, etc. from all of the courses the exam covers. Consider creating a set of index cards that contains relevant references (last names and dates are all that is needed) that you can memorize and a brief annotated bibliography. Additionally create index cards, or a personal study guide, that contains the primary content covered on the exam to aid you in studying (you cannot bring your study materials into the exam).

APPENDIX B
Liberty University
Center for Counseling and Family Studies

Proctor Application

Student Name _____ Student ID _____ LU E-mail _____

Proctor Name _____ Proctor E-Mail _____

Proctor Street Address _____ City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Proctor Day Phone Number _____ Proctor Cell Phone Number _____

A Proctor is a disinterested individual who meets the following criteria:

- Must be from a university/college, public library, governmental agency, military base, or member of a pastoral staff.
- Must not be an employer, co-worker, spouse, family member, friend, or classmate.

Proctor Responsibilities:

- Receive the exam from the faculty support coordinator
- Identify the student with a photo ID
- Physically supervise the student taking the examination
- Keep track of time for the student
- Require that the student take the Exam directly on the document e-mailed in MSWord
- Require that the student take the Exam on a computer that is NOT his/her own
- Require that the student remain with the document for the entire time of the Exam (not allow the student to open up the web or have access to other documents or sites)
- Require that the student NOT take any notes, texts, phone, etc. into the test taking room
- Avoid giving any information related to the content of the Exam
- Require that the test be taken in a public facility (i.e., library, university, testing center, church office)
- If unusual circumstances occur, please contact the faculty support coordinator

I, _____ hereby verify that I meet the proctor criteria as outlined above and that all information on this application is true to my knowledge. I also assert that I will assume my role as proctor in a professional manner and adhere to all Proctor Guidelines when overseeing the examination.

Proctor Signature _____ Date _____

Approval Signature _____ Date _____