



**Master's of Education (M.Ed.) Degree
Comprehensive Examination Guidelines
(Specific dates will be announced each semester)**

The culminating academic experience for the M.Ed. in Higher Education at the University of Arkansas is the comprehensive exam, which entails analyzing a real-life higher education case study. At the start of your comprehensive exam timeline, the program will provide an article to serve as your case study. The comprehensive exam process is offered each fall and spring semester, and students must be in their final semester of the program to take comps. Students should [register for comps](#) in their final semester, and the program will offer a pre-comps informational meeting to registered students.

Using the knowledge you have gained through your Higher Education coursework, you will have approximately 10 days to independently write a 10 to 15-page paper (not including references) that analyzes the selected case and makes recommendations for practice. Your essay should include the following three sections:

1. **Analysis and Application of Course Material to Case Study.** Use books, readings, and class notes to provide insightful and original analysis of the case from the perspectives of your courses in:
 - a. History and Philosophy of Higher Education,
 - b. Diversity of Higher Education **or** Management of Higher Education Institutions,
 - c. Legal Aspects of Higher Education, and
 - d. Student Development in Higher Education.

Questions you might address to incorporate these courses into your paper include: What are the historical roots of the overarching issue(s) presented in the case? How would management scholars explain the administrative actions presented in the case? What are the legal issues presented in the case? How can the application of a major student development theory help you better understand the case?

You do not have to incorporate scholarship beyond the four classes mentioned above, but you may incorporate materials from other courses you have taken or additional scholarly sources. Their inclusion should not overshadow your analysis of the case from the historical, diversity/management, legal, and student development perspectives.

2. **Recommendations for Practice.** Based on your scholarly analysis, make recommendations for practice to the institutional leaders in the case? Why are you suggesting this course of action? Generally, these recommendations for practice should connect to your analysis of the case in relation to your coursework.
3. **Different Institutional Context.** Complete your paper by conducting an analysis of the applicability of the issues presented in the article to a different institution. You may select the University of Arkansas or a different institution, including another institution type of your preference, such as a community college.

In your paper, demonstrate high-quality written communication skills, by:

- a. Opening with a strong and interesting introduction
- b. Including an early and clear thesis statement;
- c. Ending with a strong conclusion that nicely summarizes the paper and does not introduce new information;
- d. Containing paragraphs with strong topic sentences that support your thesis and usually include citations from course readings;
- e. Being well organized and free of grammatical errors; and
- f. Adhering to APA style (7th ed.), including a cover page, proper formatting of any header, and the inclusion of a reference list. You do not need to include an abstract.
- g. Addressing all three sections above using appropriate headings and subheadings.

Grading. You will be graded on a pass/fail basis, with each examination being evaluated on the following:

- Application of course material
- Synthesis and analysis of course material
- Creation of compelling arguments/opinions
- Logical sequence, writing, and flow of the paper
- APA formatting

Additional Information.

- You are responsible to abide by the University's 'Academic Integrity Policy', which may be found at <http://honesty.uark.edu/policy/index.php>.
- At the conclusion of the comps timeline, your exam will be due via e-mail as a Word attachment to jmurry@uark.edu.