

LINDENWOOD UNIVERSITY

COUNSELOR PREPARATION COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION (CPCE)

WHAT STUDENTS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT “COMPS”

The comprehensive exam is an exit examination required of all master's degree students. It is ordinarily taken during the student's last semester of study in the program. The purpose of the exam is to assess the student's knowledge of counseling to ensure minimum competence in the field. The CPCE will also provide collective feedback that can be used by the program in developing/adapting curriculum.

BENEFITS OF USING THE CPCE

- Allows Master's program comprehensive exam to better meet psychometric standards.
 - Gives program an objective view of the knowledge level of students.
 - Allows program to examine student functioning in various curriculum areas.
 - Promotes longitudinal self study.
 - Compares program results to national data.
 - Stimulates student integration of knowledge learned in separate courses.
 - Gives students comparative strength/weakness feedback.
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DEVELOPMENT OF THE CPCE

The CPCE is researched, developed, and distributed by both the Research and Assessment Corporation for Counseling (RACC) and the Center for Credentialing and Education (CCE), two affiliate corporations of the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC). The item writing committee was selected from master's and doctoral level professionals. The committee compiled a comprehensive listing of texts used in counselor education programs. Each question was developed based on information found in the most commonly used textbooks.

CONTENT OF THE CPCE

The CPCE will cover the eight Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) common-core areas as defined by their *Standards for Preparation*:

1. *Human growth and development* – studies that provide an understanding of the nature and needs of individuals at all developmental levels.
2. *Social and cultural foundations* – studies that provide an understanding of issues and trends in a multicultural and diverse society.
3. *Helping relationships* – studies that provide an understanding of counseling and consultation processes.
4. *Group work* – studies that provide an understanding of group development, dynamics, counseling theories, group counseling methods and skills, and other group work approaches.
5. *Career and lifestyle development* – studies that provide an understanding of career development and related life factors.
6. *Appraisal* – studies that provide an understanding of individual and group approaches to assessment and evaluation.
7. *Research and program evaluation* – studies that provide an understanding of types of research methods, basic statistics, and ethical and legal considerations in research.
8. *Professional orientation and ethics* – studies that provide an understanding of all aspects of professional functioning including history, roles, organizational structures, ethics, standards, and credentialing.

These eight core areas serve as the primary theoretical basis for the examination. It is through these areas that the CPCE is associated with accepted professional standards.

PREPARATION FOR THE CPCE

There are no published study materials available for the CPCE; however, the exam content is similar to the NBCC National Counselor Examination. Students may obtain free sample questions from the NBCC website: www.nbcc.org/exams/NCEsample2.htm. Paid subscriptions to exam test banks covering the eight content areas are available online at www.counselingexam.com/nce. A list of other study resources is available at www.nbcc.org/exams/study.htm. Please note these references are suggestions not endorsements.

FORMAT OF THE CPCE

The CPCE consists of 160 items with 20 items per CACREP area. Of the 20 items per section, 17 will be scored; the remaining three will be pretest items that are not identified to the student. The purpose of imbedded pre-testing is to generate actual score performance data on items. This allows CCE to select items for future test construction that have the most desirable psychometric attributes. Scores for each section and a total score will be reported for each student. The CCE will provide statistics on the program's students as well as national data. Each institution is responsible for determining a minimum criterion score for their

students. A demographic questionnaire will be included on the answer sheet for research purposes. Students are allowed four hours to complete the examination.

After each examination, upon obtaining the results from the CPCE office, we will contact students by mail of their grade results. Results will be posted approximately 3 weeks after the test administration. Students who fail the exam may take sub-tests of the section(s) not passed.

ELIGIBILITY AND REGISTRATION FOR THE CPCE

In order to be eligible for the comprehensive examination, students must have completed all the core courses and be a student in good standing. Applications for the CPCE can be downloaded from this site. Deadline information is also available on the application.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR THE CPCE

The following presented as representative examples of items which may appear on the exam; actual exam items will vary from these examples by length, content, and difficulty levels.

1. In attempting to understand the life perspectives and characteristics of their clients, some counselors use Kohlberg's theory of moral development as a theoretical framework. These counselors know that Kohlberg's theory includes three progressive levels culminating in
 - A. self-actualization, wherein the individual is fully humanistic.
 - B. principled thought, wherein the individual adopts a self-accepted set of standards of behavior.
 - C. androgyny, wherein the individual exhibits both male and female stereotypical behaviors.
 - D. personhood, wherein the individual is free from moral dilemmas.
2. A professional counselor determines fees for monthly consultation services on a job-by-job basis. This is an example of which of the following types of reinforcement schedules?
 - A. Variable interval
 - B. Fixed interval
 - C. Variable ratio
 - D. Fixed ratio
3. Research on the development of a person in a so-called "humanistic life outlook" has shown that it is facilitated by
 - A. formal educational experiences.
 - B. observational learning experiences.
 - C. diverse interpersonal interactions.
 - D. all of the above.
4. When persons who are characteristically shy and withdrawn participate in "assertiveness training," initially they experience uncertainty and self-doubt. Counselors refer to this social psychological concept as
 - A. cognitive dissonance.
 - B. dissociation.
 - C. individuation
 - D. acculturation.

5. "Men (used here to mean all people) are disturbed not by things, but by the view which they take of them." This quote, attributable to Epictetus, most closely describes the counseling theory developed by
 A. Rogers. B. Carkhuff. C. Freud. D. Ellis.
6. The counseling technique in which the counselor intensifies the client's emotional state in order to help the client understand the irrationality of the emotional reaction is known as
 A. confrontation. B. paradoxical intention.
 C. systematic desensitization D. reconfiguration.
7. Counselors know that groups are formed for different purposes. For example, in some groups the primary goal is to yield some specified outcome, or "product," while in others the primary goal is to focus on the "process" of interaction within the group. Which of the following groups is more product- than process-oriented?
 A. Behavioral B. Transactional-analysis C. Adlerian D. Client-centered
8. In the context of group counseling, members that are high in conformity also tend to be high in
 A. independence. B. authoritarianism. C. intelligence. D. superiority.
9. A counselor who structures a career counseling group to help group members understand a "fields and levels" approach to careers is following the theory of
 A. Super. B. Roe. C. Holland. D. Tiedeman.
10. The concept of "career maturity" has been described and researched most extensively by
 A. Crites. B. Hoyt. C. Tiedeman. D. Ginzberg.
11. Person A and Person B both took the same test. Person A got a score of 100 while Person B got a score of 75. In order for a counselor to determine whether the difference between their scores was because of "chance," the counselor would need to know which of the following characteristics of the test?
 A. Mean B. Standard deviation
 C. Standard error of measurement D. Standard error of the mean
12. A person got a score of 85 on a norm-referenced test. This means that the person
 A. mastered 85% of the material covered in the test.
 B. achieved a score better than 83% of those taking the test.
 C. answered 83 questions correctly.
 D. Insufficient information.
13. A counselor conducted a study intended to evaluate the effectiveness of on-going group career counseling on the vocational maturity of high school sophomores. The study was begun in September and continued until June. This study is particularly susceptible to which of the following threats to the validity of an experiment?
 A. Regression B. Maturation
 C. Reactive effects of experimentation D. Multiple treatment interference

14. A counselor designs a study where two experimental groups and one control group complete pre- and post-experiment measures of self-concept. The subjects were not randomly assigned to the groups because of scheduling problems. Which of the following techniques is MOST appropriate for analyzing the resultant data?

- A. Analysis of covariance
- B. Correlated t-tests
- C. Analysis of variance
- D. Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed-ranks test

15. You have been providing career counseling to a client who is seeking employment. Concurrent with the counseling, and with your knowledge, the client has made application for employment with several employers. A potential employer calls you and asks for your opinion as to your client's suitability for the employer's job opening. Under which of the following conditions are you free; i.e., not in violation of professional ethics, to provide the information requested?

- A. When it is clear that the client will not get the job unless the information is given.
- B. When you are certain that the information you would provide would assure that the client would get the job.
- C. When in your best judgment you believe the information would enhance the client's chances for getting the job.
- D. None of the above.

16. As applied to professional licensure of counselors, the term "reciprocity" means that

- A. one licensing agency agrees to accept the licensing standards of another as sufficient for its own.
- B. a licensed counselor may legally perform the functions of a licensed psychologist.
- C. certification is synonymous with licensure.
- D. graduation from a fully accredited counselor education program automatically constitutes eligibility for licensure.

ANSWERS: 1)b, 2)c, 3)d, 4)a, 5)d, 6)b, 7)a, 8)b, 9)b, 10)a, 11)c, 12)d, 13)b, 14)a, 15)d, 16)a