

University of California, San Francisco  
**School of Nursing**  
*Master's Comprehensive Examination*  
**Comprehensive Examination Handbook**

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University of California, San Francisco  
**School of Nursing**  
**Master's Comprehensive Examination Handbook**

## **Introduction**

The Graduate Division at UCSF requires students to complete a Comprehensive Examination or Thesis to fulfill the Graduate Division requirements for the Master of Science degree. The Comprehensive Examination was developed by Faculty in the School of Nursing, with several options, to evaluate the student's ability to apply advanced clinical and theoretical knowledge in a selected area of specialization and to critique research as it relates to that area.

## **Student Guidelines and Procedures**

### ***Eligibility for the Master's Thesis***

Students interested in completing the option of a [Master's Thesis](#) during their graduate studies should contact their faculty advisor.

### ***Eligibility for the Comprehensive Examination***

The student is eligible to take the Comprehensive Examination only after the fulfillment of all other requirements for the Master of Science degree, or during the quarter within which those requirements will be fulfilled. In addition, the student must "[advance to candidacy](#)" prior to taking the examination. Because a student is required to be registered for one quarter as a candidate before the degree is conferred, the application for advancement to candidacy must be submitted to the Graduate Division no later than the first day of the last quarter for which the student is registered for course work. After advancement, five quarters are allowed in which to complete all requirements for the Master of Science degree, including the Comprehensive Examination. Additional time may be granted only by petition presented to the Associate Dean, Academic Programs in the School for concurrence, and then approved by the Dean of the Graduate Division.

The Comprehensive Examination Coordinators are faculty appointed annually in each Department in the School of Nursing to coordinate the submission, distribution, and evaluation of the comprehensive exams. The primary contact for students for the comprehensive exam process is the faculty advisor. The faculty advisor will refer the student to the Department Comprehensive Examination Coordinator as needed for technical questions or questions regarding the comp exam submission process.

### ***Taking the Comprehensive Examination While on Filing Fee Status***

A student who has advanced to candidacy and completed all requirements for the Master of Science degree except the Comprehensive Examination may apply for filing fee status. Filing fee status is granted only if the student has applied for candidacy while registered for course work during the previous quarter. Filing fee status allows for reduced registration fees, but does not permit significant faculty involvement or the use of University resources and facilities, such as the library, student health services, or Millberry Union.

*NB: the student must advance to candidacy **before** applying for filing fee status and cannot do both in the same quarter. A student who intends to go on filing fee status in order to take the Comprehensive Examination during the Spring Quarter, for example, must apply for advancement to candidacy no later than the end of the preceding Fall Quarter or, at the latest, by the first day of Winter Quarter. Review the Student Handbook or check with the Graduate Division for more information on advancement to candidacy and filing fee status.*

A second request for filing fee status is permitted only if the student fails the Comprehensive Examination on the first attempt and only for the quarter immediately following the failure. If the first attempt occurs in the Spring Quarter, the student is allowed to request filing fee status for either the following Summer or Fall Quarter.

### ***Administrative Process***

- A schedule of dates for the Comprehensive Examination is posted on the [School of Nursing Master Students' Comprehensive Exam Resources CLE Site](#) indicating:
  - ◊ When the student should pick up their assigned identification number;
  - ◊ The deadline for submission of the examination;
  - ◊ When the examination will be sent to readers;
  - ◊ When results will be available.
- The identification number is obtained from the Comprehensive Examination staff person in the affiliated department.
  - ◊ It may, in special circumstances, and only with the approval of the department Comprehensive Examination Coordinator, be emailed to the student. This request must be in writing and include the student's name, mailing address, telephone number, Comprehensive Examination option and title, and where the student can be reached during the reading period. The ID number cannot be requested by phone.
- The student must submit the Comprehensive Examination no later than 12 noon on the posted deadline for that quarter. Late submissions will not be accepted.

### ***Formatting Expectations***

- The Comprehensive Examination should not exceed **20 double-spaced pages**, excluding the face sheet, reference list, and appendices. The first page of the comp is the narrative of the paper and not the face sheet.
- If an examination exceeds 20 narrative pages, anything beyond the 20<sup>th</sup> page **will not be included** in the examination scored.
- Margins should measure 1.0 inch on all four sides of the page; Times New Roman is the required font for the body of the exam. Students should use 12-point character size for the narrative.
- Literature review tables should be included as appendices and are not included in the 20-page maximum. See Appendix I and Appendix II below for literature table format. The literature tables and any other tables should be created in **Times New Roman** font and **10-point character size**. The **literature tables are to be submitted in landscape orientation format**. The literature review tables should be labeled in the order the corresponding critique appears in the narrative, and referred to in sequence as Appendix A.1, Appendix A.2 and so forth. The appendices must be referenced in the critiques and narrative per APA guidelines for use of appendices. The appendices are not included in the 20-page comprehensive examination page limit.
- Level of Evidence should be indicated in the critique narrative for quantitative studies. Appendix III below presents the Levels of Evidence classifications to be used in the Comprehensive Examination. An example of presentation of Level of Evidence in the critique narrative:
  - Broyles et al. (2000) found a correlation between increased care coordination and decreased life threatening illnesses, quantity and duration of intensive care unit (ICU) admissions, ED visits, and loss to follow up (Level of Evidence: Ib; Appendix A.1).
- Students should adhere to the editorial format of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6<sup>th</sup> Ed.) for the Comprehensive Examination. A companion manual, "*Concise Rules for APA Style, Sixth Edition*," provides clear, concise explanations and examples for the most commonly used aspects of APA formatting.
  - If additional information is needed, the manual guides the reader to more in-depth information on the APA website. An overview of the *Concise Rules* companion manual can be found at <http://www.apastyle.org/products/4210004.aspx>.
  - APA Style resources are available in widespread locations on the Internet, such as [owl.english.purdue.edu](http://owl.english.purdue.edu), or any other resources provided by the Scientific Writing Program Coordinator.

- The Sixth Edition of the APA Manual, and a link to supplemental materials for manual owners, may be viewed at <http://www.apastyle.org/manual/>.
- Comprehensive Examination face sheet (see below) is required to be submitted. The student's name *should not appear* on **any** part of the Comprehensive Examination. The examination is identified only by the assigned ID number, which should be entered on the face sheet and on every page of the exam. This header should appear at the top right-hand margin, to the left of the page number per APA formatting. The title of the examination should reflect its content and will be the basis for the department Comprehensive Examination Coordinator to assign readers.

### *Suggested Number of Articles for Review*

The suggested number of articles to be critiqued for each Comprehensive Examination option is as follows:

Research Proposal	4-5 articles
Critical Literature Review	5-7 articles
Problem-Solving Proposal	4-5 articles
White Paper	4-5 articles

- Articles chosen for critique should be published within the last five to seven years. Exceptions are allowed if the article is from a seminal/groundbreaking piece of research that has served as the foundation for subsequent research in the field. Other exceptions are if insufficient number of articles to meet requirements for the review. Please discuss with faculty advisor before invoking these exceptions.
- Students should take into consideration the points assigned for the review of literature section as well as the other sections of the comprehensive examination and allocate the number of pages per section accordingly.

### *Use of Quantitative and/or Qualitative Research Review Table*

- All specific research-related information on the articles critiqued should appear in either a quantitative (Appendix I) or qualitative (Appendix II) research review grid. The table includes study design, sampling techniques, identification of variables, methodology, data analysis, etc.
- **This detailed information should not be repeated in the body of the Comprehensive Examination.** The body of the Comprehensive Examination should be used for the synthesis, critical analysis, and discussion of the critiques and the contrast of chosen articles, as well as discussion of issues generated by the Comprehensive Examination topic.
- **Although research review tables are not included in the page limit, they should be limited to one page per article.**
- Column headings for both the quantitative and qualitative research review tables are listed in Appendix I and Appendix II, along with information to be included in each column.

### *Brief Descriptions of Comprehensive Examination Formats* (See Appendix VI)

- A overview of the four comprehensive examination formats is presented in Appendix VI.

### *What Should be Submitted?*

The following items are to be submitted electronically by the student as directed by individual departments:

- A completed face sheet.
- Submit comprehensive examination **as a PDF document and a Microsoft WORD document with track changes deactivated**. Do not submit a locked WORD document. All WORD documents with track changes present will be returned to the student for resubmission.
- A Student Contact Page that provides the student's name, mailing address, home and

cellphone numbers, and any other pertinent information that allows the student to be reached during the reading period.

An additional copy of the comprehensive exam should be retained by the student.

### ***Review of the Comprehensive Examination***

All faculty members in the School of Nursing are eligible to be designated to read the Comprehensive Examination. The student may propose the names of four readers on the face sheet, and the name of a single faculty member requested not to be a reader.

The examination is assigned to faculty on the basis of availability and appropriateness, and **there is no guarantee that the proposed faculty will or will not be assigned to read the exam.**

Department Comprehensive Examination Coordinators assign each examination to two readers, who score the examination independently. The examination is scored on a pass/fail basis. In the event that the first two readers do not agree on the pass/fail status of the examination (including a technical fail), it is submitted to a third reader. The final score is then forwarded to the Office of Student Affairs. The final score sheets for the comprehensive examination **are not made available to students**, but retained in the Office of Student Affairs. Faculty comment sheets will be made available to students with the pass/fail results.

### ***Quality of Writing Comprehensive Examination Technical Failure (Area I)***

Failure to achieve a score of at least 15 in Area I of the Comprehensive Examination will result in an automatic *technical failure* of the exam, and the same procedures will be followed as in a regular failure.

**Evidence of plagiarism will constitute failure of the Comprehensive Examination** and can be grounds for dismissal from the School of Nursing (see [UCSF Code of Conduct](#) and [CLE site SON Master Students' Comprehensive Exam Resources](#)). *Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language* defines *plagiarism* as follows:

“To steal or pass off as one’s own (the ideas or words of another); use (a created production) without crediting the source; to commit literary theft; to present as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source.”

## **Circumstances Requiring Petitions**

### ***Deadline Extension***

A student may petition for an extension only in the event of an emergency, that is, an occurrence over which the student has no control (e.g. a family unforeseen emergency). A Deadline Extension Request Petition (see appendix IV) must be submitted to the student’s department Comprehensive Examination Coordinator at least 48 hours before the examination due date. A request made by telephone must be followed by the written petition. All extension requests are assessed on a case-by-case basis.

The student will be notified of the Coordinator’s decision regarding extension within 24 hours of the request, by telephone and in writing. If a second extension is required, the coordinator will forward the request to the chair of the department for approval.

### ***Oral Examination***

A written petition to request an Oral Comprehensive Exam (see appendix V) must describe specific reasons for the request. Submit the petition to the department Comprehensive Examination Coordinator.

Upon approval of the petition and 14 days before the examination, the student should submit the following documents to the department Comprehensive Examination Coordinator:

- Oral Examination Face Sheet
- An outline of the topic to be discussed within the context of one of the Comprehensive Examination formats
- A reference list of the articles critiqued
- Research tables

The oral examination lasts approximately two hours and is evaluated against the same criteria of the written examination except for technical criteria, which are as follows:

- Organization of information
- Structure of discussion (logical sequence of topic)
- Documentation (preparation and knowledge of field)
- Delivery, quality, and clarity of presentation

The student may propose five faculty members to conduct the oral examination, indicating, as with the written exam, any faculty who should not participate in the examination process. The department Comprehensive Examination Coordinator selects three faculty members. As with the written examination, there is no guarantee that the proposed faculty will be assigned to conduct the examination. The department records the exam by audio or video means.

### **Procedures Related to Failure of the Comprehensive Examination**

#### ***Notification of Failure***

The department Comprehensive Examination Coordinator will inform the faculty adviser of any student who fails the examination. The faculty adviser or coordinator will then notify the student of the failure and make faculty comments available before the posted date results are available.

#### ***Retaking the Comprehensive Examination***

A student who fails the Comprehensive Examination is allowed to retake it *only once*, and the resubmission may be submitted at the end of the quarter following the initial exam. The student must work with a faculty member to rewrite the examination. The Comprehensive Examination must be retaken within the time permitted after advancement to candidacy. An oral or written examination may be chosen, but it is strongly recommended that the same option be followed as for the first examination.

If the student chooses an oral exam, a written request must be submitted to the department Comprehensive Examination Coordinator. The Comprehensive Examination Coordinator notifies the Associate Dean of Academic Programs in writing, and then nominates a committee of three faculty members to hear the oral examination. Upon approval of the committee by the Associate Dean, the Comprehensive Examination Coordinator, notifies the student of the area of knowledge to be tested, that is, the knowledge that the student is expected to have mastered during the graduate program. The same evaluation and technical criteria described above for the oral exam applies when the examination is retaken orally. In the case of failure and resubmission, students may use faculty resources for guidance while on filing fee status.

University of California, San Francisco  
**School of Nursing**  
**Master's Comprehensive Examination**

**Face Sheet Written Examination**

1. Identification number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Comprehensive Examination option (check one):

- Problem Solving Proposal
- Critical Literature Review
- Research Proposal
- White Paper

3. Specialty area (e.g., FNP, AGACNP) \_\_\_\_\_

4. Title of exam \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Suggested faculty readers. (The department Comprehensive Examination Coordinator assigns faculty readers on the basis of their availability and appropriateness. There can be no guarantee that the examination will be assigned to the faculty members who are indicated.)

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

*This face sheet must be attached to the examination.*

If you are requesting that a particular faculty member not read this exam, please provide their name and an explanation below.

Name of faculty member: \_\_\_\_\_

Explanation: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

University of California, San Francisco  
**School of Nursing**  
**Master's Comprehensive Examination**

**Student Contact Sheet**

**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mailing Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Home Telephone Number:** (      ) \_\_\_\_\_

**Cell Phone Number:** (      ) \_\_\_\_\_

**UCSF Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Personal Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Additional Pertinent Info** (other info we need to be able to reach after Comp Submission (i.e. travel plans))



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**Oral Exam Face Sheet**

1. Identification number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Comprehensive Examination option (check one):

- Problem Solving Proposal
- Critical Literature Review
- Research Proposal
- White Paper

3. Specialty area (e.g., FNP, AGACNP) \_\_\_\_\_

4. Title of exam \_\_\_\_\_

5. Suggested committee members. (The department Comprehensive Examination Coordinator assigns committee members on the basis of their availability and appropriateness. There can be no guarantee that the examination will be assigned to the faculty members who are indicated.)

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

*This face sheet must be submitted to your department chair ten days prior to the exam date, along with an outline, bibliography, and research grids.*

If you are requesting for a particular faculty member not participate in evaluation of the oral exam, please provide their name and an explanation below.

Name of faculty member: \_\_\_\_\_

Explanation: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

University of California, San Francisco  
**School of Nursing**  
**Master's Comprehensive Examination**  
**Problem Solving Proposal (PSP) Scoring Sheet**

Student Identification Number: \_\_\_\_\_

**Scoring Procedure:**

1. Indicate the appropriate score for each criterion. Criterion scores for graduating Master's students should be predominantly 4 (good) and 5 (excellent). A consistent score throughout of "3" (fair) will not yield a passing score.
  - 5 = excellent
  - 4 = good
  - 3 = fair
  - 2 = poor
  - 1 = very poor or absent
2. Multiply the area total by the designated multiplier (e.g. 3.75, 4.0).
3. Add area scores to obtain a point total for the exam.
4. A score of less than 15 in Area I will result in a Technical Fail.

AREAS TO BE ADDRESSED	EVALUATION CRITERIA	SCORE
<b>I. Quality of Writing</b> a) Consistently uses correct grammar, spelling, sentence structure, and APA format to clearly express the focus of the paper with logical flow.	<b>Content and focus:</b> Clearly defines topic of paper and maintains topical focus throughout	1/2/3/4/5
	<b>Logic and flow:</b> Development of ideas is clear and logical. Transitions between Comprehensive Examination sections are smooth.	1/2/3/4/5
	<b>Structure and organization:</b> Paragraphs have strong topic sentences and are well developed.	1/2/3/4/5
	<b>Sentence structure:</b> Sentences are clear, concise, and direct.	1/2/3/4/5
	<b>APA format:</b> Correctly and consistently uses APA format.	1/2/3/4/5
	<b>Grammar and spelling:</b> Uses correct grammar, punctuation, wording, and spelling.	1/2/3/4/5
	<b>AREA TOTAL</b> (30 points possible; 15 required for technical pass)	

*(continued)*

<p><b>II. The Problem and its Environmental Context</b></p> <p>a) Identifies a significant problem in an area of advanced nursing practice.</p> <p>b) Describes the characteristics of the environment within which the problem exists.</p>	<p><b>Clarity of problem:</b> Clearly identifies and describes an area where there is a need for improvement in current practice. The description should specify why the issue is a problem. The problem statement includes a description of the context of the problem, succinctly identifying where the problem occurs and who is the target population.</p>	1/2/3/4/5
	<p><b>Significance of problem:</b> Introduces the importance of the problem to clients and/or the significance for advanced nursing practice. Clearly describes the impacted population, key stakeholders in solving the problem, and the goal to be accomplished.</p>	1/2/3/4/5
	<p><b>Clarity of setting:</b> Describes the nature of the physical, socio-economic, and/or cultural setting, as well as any relevant political context. Describes impact on resources and stakeholders.</p>	1/2/3/4/5
	<p><b>Clarity of roles and inter-relationships:</b> Describes responsibilities and functions of individuals, including relevant stakeholders significant to the problem, and the roles and responsibilities of nursing. Explains the nature of the interactions between significant individuals and the influence of the setting on their relationships.</p>	1/2/3/4/5
	<b>AREA TOTAL</b>	
	<b>AREA TOTAL × 3.75 (75 points possible)</b>	

<p><b>III. Literature Review: Research Analysis</b></p> <p>a) Documents the nature of the problem and current approaches to its resolution.</p> <p>b) Integrates elements of research tables (Appendices I &amp; II) appropriately in narrative.</p>	<p><b>Organization of the review &amp; quality of references:</b> Clearly describes how literature review is organized, including conceptualization of approach and rationale for articles selected for review. Reviews literature significant to the area, including classic/primary sources and current works. Meta-analyses and literature review articles are discussed as appropriate for background and significance purposes.</p>	1/2/3/4/5
	<p><b>Addresses elements of critique:</b> <i>Research literature:</i> Uses the body of the paper to synthesize and discuss relevant study findings and conclusions from studies presented in the research tables. Includes the Level of Evidence (Appendix III) for <b>quantitative studies</b>, the study author's interpretation of findings, as well as a discussion of strengths and limitations (including validity and reliability), and generalizability of the study. For <b>qualitative studies</b>, includes the author's presentation and interpretation of findings, and analysis of the rigor of the study findings.</p>	1/2/3/4/5
	<p><b>Quality of critique and interpretation:</b> Accurately evaluates the elements listed above and their potential contribution to knowledge.</p>	1/2/3/4/5
	<p><b>Quality of research table:</b> Uses the research table to identify and explain objective information and data from the research study, as outlined in Appendices I and II. Concisely summarizes and identifies the key study findings in the literature and reports in table.</p>	1/2/3/4/5
	<b>AREA TOTAL</b>	
	<b>AREA TOTAL × 4.0 (80 points possible)</b>	

<p><b>IV. Theoretical Discussion</b></p> <p>a) Identify theoretical or conceptual framework/construct(s) underlying the nature</p>	<p><b>Quality of theoretical discussion:</b></p>	1/2/3/4/5
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of the problem and/or its resolution. b) Applies theoretical or conceptual framework to literature and discussion.	Clearly discusses a relevant theory or conceptual framework that demonstrates an enhanced understanding of the topic or issue.	
	<b>AREA TOTAL</b>	
	<b>AREA TOTAL X 4.0 (20 points possible)</b>	

<b>V. Intervention/ action, Implementation, and Evaluation</b> a) States the intervention or action to be taken to resolve or reduce the problem. b) Describes the steps or phases of the proposed implementation. c) Defines an evaluation procedure for the selected intervention/action.	<b>Clarity of expected outcomes:</b> Specifies the desired outcome(s) to be achieved by resolving or reducing the problem.	1/2/3/4/5
	<b>Defensibility:</b> Demonstrates that the intervention has the potential for substantial improvement in the problem. If necessary, justifies choice compared with other alternatives, using relevant research and/or theory/conceptual framework.	1/2/3/4/5
	<b>Realism:</b> Shows feasibility of the intervention as it pertains to the environmental context (e.g., the role of nursing, available financial or human resources, interrelationships) as discussed in Area II (b).	1/2/3/4/5
	<b>Clarity and appropriateness of implementation:</b> Outlines procedures for implementing the intervention in a logical sequence. Considers the resources and constraints in the environment.	1/2/3/4/5
	<b>Clarity and appropriateness of evaluation procedure:</b> Delineates specific, measurable, and appropriate criteria for assessing each expected outcome. Describes how data would be collected to evaluate the effect of the intervention.	1/2/3/4/5
	<b>AREA TOTAL</b>	
	<b>AREA TOTAL × 5.0 (125points possible)</b>	

<b>Summary</b>	Area I	/30
	Area II	/75
	Area III	/80
	Area IV	/20
	Area V	/125
	Total Exam Points	/330
	(Needed to pass: 231)	Pass Fail Technical fail

University of California, San Francisco  
**School of Nursing**  
**Master's Comprehensive Examination**  
**Critical Literature Review (CLR) Scoring Sheet**

Student Identification Number: \_\_\_\_\_

**Scoring Procedure:**

1. Indicate the appropriate score for each criterion. Criterion scores for graduating Master's students should be predominantly 4 (good) and 5 (excellent). A consistent score throughout of "3" (fair) will not yield a passing score.

5 = excellent

4 = good

3 = fair

2 = poor

1 = very poor or absent

2. Multiply the area total by the designated multiplier (e.g. 2.66. 7.0).

3. Add area scores to obtain a point total for the exam.

4. A score of less than 15 in Area I will result in a Technical Fail.

AREAS TO BE ADDRESSED	EVALUATION CRITERIA	SCORE
<b>I. Quality of Writing</b> a) Consistently uses correct grammar, spelling, sentence structure, and APA format to clearly express the focus of the paper with logical flow.	<b>Content and focus:</b> Clearly defines topic of paper and maintains topical focus throughout	1/2/3/4/5
	<b>Logic and flow:</b> Development of ideas is clear and logical. Transitions between Comprehensive Examination sections are smooth.	1/2/3/4/5
	<b>Structure and organization:</b> Paragraphs have strong topic sentences and are well developed.	1/2/3/4/5
	<b>Sentence structure:</b> Sentences are clear, concise, and direct.	1/2/3/4/5
	<b>APA format:</b> Correctly and consistently uses APA format.	1/2/3/4/5
	<b>Grammar and spelling:</b> Uses correct grammar, punctuation, wording, and spelling.	1/2/3/4/5
	<b>AREA TOTAL</b> (30 points possible; 15 required for technical pass)	

*(continued)*

<b>II. The Topic or Issue:</b> <b>Presentation and Exposition</b> a) Identifies a significant topic or issue in the literature, provide a rationale within a conceptual approach, and how the critical literature review is organized.	<b>Clarity of topic and purpose:</b> Clearly states the topic or issue and the reason(s) for its selection. The purpose of the review is well defined, concisely stated, and congruent with the selected topic or issue.	1/2/3/4/5
	<b>Significance of problem:</b> Clearly states significance of the topic for advanced nursing practice and research. The history and importance of the topic or issue are described.	1/2/3/4/5
	<b>Organization of review:</b> Clearly describes how review is organized, including conceptualization of approach and rationale for articles selected for review, and other inclusion or exclusion criteria (i.e. “only nursing authors,” “only nursing journals,” “only journals since 1998”).	1/2/3/4/5
	<b>AREA TOTAL</b>	
	<b>AREA TOTAL X 2.66</b> (40 points possible)	

<b>III. Literature Review: Critical Analysis</b> a) Builds a case for depicting major gaps or accomplishments in the literature. b) Integrates elements of research tables (Appendices I & II) appropriately in narrative.	<b>Quality of references:</b> Selects significant literature, including classic and current articles. References should be primary sources. Meta-analyses and literature review articles are discussed as appropriate for background and significance purposes.	1/2/3/4/5
	<b>Addresses elements of critique:</b> <i>Research literature:</i> Uses the body of the paper to synthesize and discuss relevant study findings and conclusions from studies presented in the research tables. Includes the Level of Evidence (Appendix III) for <b>quantitative studies</b> , the study author’s interpretation of findings, as well as a discussion of strengths and limitations (including validity and reliability), and generalizability of the study. For <b>qualitative studies</b> , includes the author’s presentation and interpretation of findings, and analysis of the rigor of the study findings.	1/2/3/4/5
	<b>Quality of critique and interpretation:</b> Accurately evaluates the elements listed above and their potential contribution to knowledge.	1/2/3/4/5
	<b>Quality of research table:</b> Uses the research table to identify and explain objective information and data from the research study, as outlined in Appendices I and II. Concisely summarizes and identifies the key study findings in the literature and reports in table.	1/2/3/4/5
	<b>AREA TOTAL</b>	
	<b>AREA TOTAL × 7.0</b> (140 points possible)	

<b>IV. Theoretical Discussion</b> a) Identify theoretical or conceptual framework construct(s) underlying the nature of the problem and/or its resolution. b) Summarizes the theoretical discussion and applies theoretical	<b>Quality of theoretical discussion:</b> Clearly discusses a relevant theory or conceptual framework that demonstrates an enhanced understanding of the topic or issue.	1/2/3/4/5
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or conceptual framework to literature and discussion.		
	<b>AREA TOTAL</b>	
	<b>AREA TOTAL X 4.0</b> (20 points possible)	

<b>V. Discussion and Application</b> a) Interprets and discusses practice implications and need for future research via a synopsis of the literature review.	<b>Critical and original analysis:</b> Analyzes the body of literature and theoretical discussion that was presented in Section III. Summarizes the theoretical discussion and significant accomplishments in the literature, presents discussion congruent with the reviewed articles and appropriate to the topic and purpose.	1/2/3/4/5
	<b>Integration, synthesis, and implications:</b> Describes the relationship between major findings and identifies gaps in literature, and further research. Formulates pertinent, researchable questions, propositions, and hypotheses based on the synthesis of findings/gaps. Discusses implications and significance for advanced nursing practice.	1/2/3/4/5
	<b>AREA TOTAL</b>	
	<b>AREA TOTAL × 10.0</b> (100 points possible)	

<b>SUMMARY</b>	AREA I	/30
	AREA II	/40
	AREA III	/140
	AREA IV	/20
	AREA V	/100
	<b>Total Exam Points</b> (Possible points 330; 231 Points needed to pass)	/330
	Pass Fail Technical fail	

University of California, San Francisco  
**School of Nursing**  
**Master's Comprehensive Examination**  
**Research Proposal (RP) Scoring Sheet**

Student Identification Number: \_\_\_\_\_

**Scoring Procedure:**

1. Indicate the appropriate score for each criterion. Criterion scores for graduating Master's students should be predominantly 4 (good) and 5 (excellent). A consistent score throughout of "3" (fair) will not yield a passing score.

5 = excellent

4 = good

3 = fair

2 = poor

1 = very poor or absent

2. Multiply the area total by the designated multiplier (e.g. 4.67, 5.0).

3. Add area scores to obtain a point total for the exam.

4. A score of less than 15 in Area I will result in a Technical Fail.

AREAS TO BE ADDRESSED	EVALUATION CRITERIA	SCORE
<b>I. Quality of Writing</b> a) Consistently uses correct grammar, spelling, sentence structure, and APA format to clearly express the focus of the paper with logical flow.	<b>Content and focus:</b> Clearly defines topic of paper and maintains topical focus throughout	1/2/3/4/5
	<b>Logic and flow:</b> Development of ideas is clear and logical. Transitions between Comprehensive Examination sections are smooth.	1/2/3/4/5
	<b>Structure and organization:</b> Paragraphs have strong topic sentences and are well developed.	1/2/3/4/5
	<b>Sentence structure:</b> Sentences are clear, concise, and direct.	1/2/3/4/5
	<b>APA format:</b> Correctly and consistently uses APA format.	1/2/3/4/5
	<b>Grammar and spelling:</b> Uses correct grammar, punctuation, wording, and spelling.	1/2/3/4/5
	<b>AREA TOTAL</b> (30 points possible; 15 required for technical pass)	



<b>II. Study and its Context</b> a) Introduces the specific problem being addressed, the aims of the study and its significance to advanced nursing practice and society.	<b>Clarity of purpose:</b> Clearly states the focus of the research, precisely and concisely specifying the research aims/questions and problem variables to be studied. Specifies the reasons for focusing on the selected problem variables while excluding others.	1/2/3/4/5
	<b>Significance of problem:</b> Clearly argues the practical and theoretical importance of the question and the value of the potential study findings to society and advancing nursing practice.	1/2/3/4/5
	<b>Comprehensiveness and conciseness:</b> Presents the study purpose and its context in a logical and succinct manner.	1/2/3/4/5
	<b>AREA TOTAL</b>	
	<b>AREA TOTAL × 4.67 (70 points possible)</b>	

<b>III. Literature Review</b> a) Identifies preliminary empirical work guiding the study proposal and the questions/hypotheses of interest. b) Integrates elements of research tables (Appendices I & II) appropriately in narrative.	<b>Clarity:</b> Presents the perspective(s) selected to guide this study. States assumptions, defines concepts/terms to be used, and specifies questions or hypotheses.	1/2/3/4/5
	<b>Organization of the review &amp; Quality of references:</b> Clearly describes how literature review is organized, including conceptualization of approach and rationale for articles selected. Selects significant literature, including classic/primary sources and current articles. Meta-analyses and literature review articles are discussed as appropriate for background and significance purposes.	1/2/3/4/5
	<b>Quality of research critique and synthesis:</b> Uses the body of the paper to synthesize findings from studies presented in the research table, and discusses the relevant study findings that inform the proposed research. Accurately evaluates pertinent research on the basis of merit (strengths and limitations, including sampling, design, results, validity and reliability, generalizability), Level of Evidence (Appendix III) for quantitative studies, and implications of study findings in relation to the proposed research proposal. Includes literature significant to the area, including classic and current knowledge about this problem.	1/2/3/4/5
	<b>Quality of research table:</b> Uses the research table to identify and explain objective information and data from the study as outlined in Appendices I and II. Concisely summarizes and identifies the key study findings in the literature and reports in table.	1/2/3/4/5
	<b>AREA TOTAL</b>	
<b>AREA TOTAL × 5.0 (100 points possible)</b>		

<b>IV. Theoretical Discussion</b> a) Identify theoretical or conceptual framework/construct(s) underlying the nature of the problem and/or its resolution. b) Summarizes the theoretical discussion and applies theoretical or conceptual framework to literature and discussion.	<b>Quality of theoretical discussion:</b> Clearly discusses a relevant theory or conceptual framework that demonstrates an enhanced understanding of the topic or issue.	1/2/3/4/5
	<b>AREA TOTAL</b>	
	<b>AREA TOTAL X 4.0 (20 points possible)</b>	

<p><b>V. Methodology</b></p> <p>a) Describes in detail the following parameters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> study design</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> setting including environmental resources and/or constraints</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> sample (the numbers and characteristics involved), selection process and consent forms</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> materials, tools, and instruments used and discusses the reliability, validity, and appropriateness of each in table format in the appendix and a <b>copy of the tool in the appendix</b> as well.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> procedures used including interventions and/or protocols</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> data analysis</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> resources to be used in the conduct of the proposed study</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> limitations of the proposed study</li> </ul>	<p><b>Adequacy:</b> Selects a methodology that adequately addresses the problem/variables specified. Underlying logic is made explicit for the choice of design, setting, sample, and sampling.</p>	1/2/3/4/5
	<p><b>Consistency:</b> Provides a fit between design, setting, sample, method of inquiry, and procedures with the question being addressed.</p>	1/2/3/4/5
	<p><b>Clarity:</b> Presents the methods so that another research team within that specialty area could replicate the study.</p>	1/2/3/4/5
	<p><b>Appropriateness:</b> Addresses issues of validity and reliability of instruments or method of inquiry, adequacy of procedures, and appropriateness of approach to data analysis. Describes data analysis and limitations of the proposed study.</p>	1/2/3/4/5
	<p><b>Feasibility:</b> Provides a brief summary of ability to perform the investigation.</p>	1/2/3/4/5
	<p><b>Integrity:</b> Demonstrates ethical comportment, prudence, and sensitivity to concerns/needs of others potentially involved and/or affected by the study (e.g., participants, families, setting and personnel, informed consent process, etc.).</p>	1/2/3/4/5
	<p><b>Realism:</b> Addresses the realities of accessing the target population and gathering desired data.</p>	1/2/3/4/5
	<b>AREA TOTAL</b>	
<b>AREA TOTAL × 3.14 (110 points possible)</b>		

Summary	Area I	/30
	Area II	/70
	Area III	/100
	Area IV	/20
	Area IV	/110
	Total Exam Points	/330
	(Needed to pass: 231)	

University of California, San Francisco  
**School of Nursing**  
**Master's Comprehensive Examination**  
**White Paper (WP) Scoring Sheet**

Student Identification Number: \_\_\_\_\_

**Scoring Procedure:**

1. Indicate the appropriate score for each criterion. Criterion scores for graduating Master's students should be predominantly 4 (good) and 5 (excellent). A consistent score throughout of "3" (fair) will not yield a passing score.

5 = excellent

4 = good

3 = fair

2 = poor

1 = very poor or absent

2. Multiply the area total by the designated multiplier (e.g. 3.5, 5.0).

3. Add area scores to obtain a point total for the exam.

4. A score of less than 15 in Area I will result in a Technical Fail.

AREAS TO BE ADDRESSED	EVALUATION CRITERIA	SCORE
<b>I. Quality of Writing</b> a) Consistently uses correct grammar, spelling, sentence structure, and APA format to clearly express the focus of the paper with logical flow.	<b>Content and focus:</b> Clearly defines topic of paper and maintains topical focus throughout	1/2/3/4/5
	<b>Logic and flow:</b> Development of ideas is clear and logical. Transitions between Comprehensive Examination sections are smooth.	1/2/3/4/5
	<b>Structure and organization:</b> Paragraphs have strong topic sentences and are well developed.	1/2/3/4/5
	<b>Sentence structure:</b> Sentences are clear, concise, and direct.	1/2/3/4/5
	<b>APA format:</b> Correctly and consistently uses APA format.	1/2/3/4/5
	<b>Grammar and spelling:</b> Uses correct grammar, punctuation, wording, and spelling.	1/2/3/4/5
	<b>AREA TOTAL</b> (30 points possible; 15 required for technical pass)	

<b>II. Introduction and Background</b> a) Describes a health policy issue or condition or set of conditions. b) Describes how the issue has been framed and why it is important. c) Uses data to illustrate the size and scope of the issue.	<b>Clarity of policy issue:</b> Clearly describes a health policy issue or condition, or set of conditions and the reason for its selection. Provides background evidence about the issue.	1/2/3/4/5
	<b>Significance of issue/policy:</b> Clearly provides historical context including when the issue emerged, what has been done about it in the past, and how long it has been an issue. Identifies the key stakeholders and what they have at stake.	1/2/3/4/5
	<b>Importance to health care/nursing:</b> Explains the importance of the issue to health, health care, health policy, and advanced nursing practice.	1/2/3/4/5
	<b>Quality of evidence:</b> Uses current and relevant evidence to show the importance of this issue, creating original tables, charts, or figures to summarize data. Provides summary of the implications of these data.	1/2/3/4/5
	<b>AREA TOTAL</b>	
	<b>AREA TOTAL × 3.5 (70 points possible)</b>	

<b>III. Literature Review: Summary of Evidence-based Research</b> a) Synthesizes relevant literature. b) Integrates elements of research tables (Appendices I & II) appropriately in narrative.	<b>Organization of the review &amp; Quality of references:</b> Clearly describes how literature review is organized, including conceptualization of approach and rationale for articles selected for review. Selects significant literature, including classic/primary sources and current works, and identifies gaps in the literature. Meta-analyses and literature review articles are discussed as appropriate for background and significance purposes.	1/2/3/4/5
	<b>Addresses elements of critique:</b> <i>Research literature:</i> Uses the body of the paper to synthesize and discuss relevant study findings and conclusions from studies presented in the research tables. Includes the Level of Evidence (Appendix III) for <b>quantitative studies</b> , the study author's interpretation of findings, as well as a discussion of strengths and limitations (including validity and reliability), and generalizability of the study. For <b>qualitative studies</b> , includes the author's presentation and interpretation of findings, and analysis of the rigor of the study findings.	1/2/3/4/5
	<b>Quality of critique and interpretation:</b> Accurately evaluates the elements listed above and their potential contribution to knowledge.	1/2/3/4/5
	<b>Quality of research table:</b> The Research Table should identify and explain objective information/data from the studies as outlined in Appendices I and II. Concisely summarizes and identifies the key study findings in the literature and reports in table.	1/2/3/4/5
	<b>AREA TOTAL</b>	
	<b>AREA TOTAL × 5.0 (100 points possible)</b>	

<b>IV. Theoretical Discussion</b> a) Discusses a relevant policy- related theoretical perspective. b) Discusses how this theory is relevant to the issue/problem, and	<b>Quality of theoretical discussion:</b> Clearly discusses a relevant theory or conceptual framework that demonstrates an enhanced understanding of the topic or issue.	1/2/3/4/5
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describes how the theory suggests, predicts, explains, or enhances understanding of the policy issue.		
	<b>AREA TOTAL</b>	
	<b>AREA TOTAL X 4.0</b> (20 points possible)	

<b>V. Policy Solutions</b> a) Discuss a possible policy decision/action that could be implemented to address your set of conditions/issue/problem. b) Describe the feasibility of the proposed solution and costs. c) Define an evaluation framework/procedure for the selected policy intervention. d) Summarize the conditions/issue/problem and policy solution/action.	<b>Implementation of solutions:</b> Clarity of description of the policy intervention with use of supporting data	1/2/3/4/5
	<b>Feasibility and cost analysis:</b> Describes feasibility of solution from perspective of costs and timeframe for implementation.	1/2/3/4/5
	<b>Evaluation framework:</b> Clarity of evaluation criteria. Delineates specific, measurable, and appropriate criteria for assessing each expected outcome. Identify cost information that would be analyzed as part of the evaluation.	1/2/3/4/5
	<b>Summary and conclusion:</b> Concise summary of issue, data, research findings, and policy action, and evaluation.	1/2/3/4/5
	<b>AREA TOTAL</b>	
	<b>AREA TOTAL × 5.5</b> (110 points possible)	

Summary	Area I	/30
	Area II	/70
	Area III	/100
	Area IV	/20
	Area V	/110
	Total Exam Points	/330
	(Needed to pass: 231)	

**Appendix I: Quantitative Research Literature Review Table**

Citation	Aims	Design & Methodology	Sample & Setting	Variables	Measurement & Analysis	Findings
Include only first author, year, journal, volume, number and pages	What was the purpose of the study? What were the hypotheses/null hypotheses or states research question?	Indicate the design and briefly describe the procedures used to collect data.	n = ? What were the sample demographics? What recruitment procedures were used? What were the inclusion/exclusion criteria? How was the setting selected?	What were the variables and their definitions? Give the function go the variables if listed (i.e., independent/dependent/control variables).	What scales were used to measure variables (e.g., name of scale, author, reliability info if provided [e.g., Cronbach alphas]). What statistical tests were used to answer the research question?	List the key findings from the results table, with corresponding significance values (for every statistical test you have in the measurement column, you should provide a corresponding value).

The body of the Comprehensive Examination should be used for the critique and contrast of chosen articles, as well as synthesis and discussion of ideas generated by the Comprehensive Examination content.

**Detailed information presented in this table should not be duplicated in the body of the Comprehensive Examination**, but should be referred to in the narrative consistent with APA formatting expectations with use of appendices.

The Literature tables should be **limited to one page per article** using a separate page for each table. The pages for the Literature Tables are not included in the page limit for the Comprehensive Examination. The tables should appear **sequentially** in the order that they are presented in the critique narrative, and should be labeled as Appendix A.1, Appendix A.2 and so on.

**Appendix II: Qualitative Research Literature Review Table**

<b>Citation</b>	<b>Design &amp; Methodology</b>	<b>Aims</b>	<b>Sample &amp; Sampling</b>	<b>Analysis</b>	<b>Findings</b>
Include only first author, year, journal, volume, number and pages	Study design. Data sources and data-collection strategies.	What was the purpose of the study?	How many participants were there? What were the sample demographics? What was the sampling approach? Inclusion/exclusion criteria. How was the setting selected?	How were data analyzed? What software was used (if any)?	What were the major themes and findings?

The body of the Comprehensive Examination should be used for the critique and contrast of chosen articles, as well as synthesis and discussion of ideas generated by the Comprehensive Examination content.

**Detailed information presented in this table should not be duplicated in the body of the Comprehensive Examination**, but should be referred to in the narrative consistent with APA formatting expectations with use of appendices.

The Literature tables should be **limited to one page per article** using a separate page for each table. The pages for the Literature Tables are not included in the page limit for the Comprehensive Examination. The tables should appear **sequentially** in the order that they are presented in the critique narrative, and should be labeled as Appendix A.1, Appendix A.2 and so on.

**Appendix III: Levels of Evidence\***

<b>I-a</b>	Systematic review of randomized clinical trials (RCTs)
<b>I-b</b>	Systematic review of non-randomized clinical trials
<b>II-a</b>	Single randomized control trial of an intervention or treatment
<b>II-b</b>	Single non-randomized control trial of an intervention or condition
<b>III</b>	Systematic review of correlational/ observational studies
<b>IV</b>	Single correlational/ observational study
<b>V</b>	Systematic review of descriptive/ qualitative or physiologic studies (i.e., laboratory or animal research)
<b>VI</b>	Single descriptive/qualitative or physiologic study (i.e., laboratory or animal research)
<b>VII</b>	Opinions of authorities, expert committees
<p><b>All articles should meet the following criteria:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Published in refereed (peer-reviewed) journals</li> <li>(2) Published within the last five to seven years. Exceptions are allowed if the article is from a seminal/groundbreaking piece of research that has served as the foundation for subsequent research in the field. Other exceptions are if insufficient number of articles to meet requirements from the review. Please discuss with faculty advisor before invoking these exceptions.</li> <li>(3) Research or Research Based, <b>with Level of Evidence between I through VI</b> using the classification system shown above. Systematic review articles are not utilized for literature critiques in comp exam.</li> </ol>	

**From** Grove, S. K., Gray, J. R., & Burns, N. (2014). *Understanding nursing research: Building an evidence-based practice* (6<sup>th</sup> Ed.). Philadelphia; Elsevier Health Sciences.



**Appendix IV: Deadline Extension Request Petition**

*To be submitted to the student's Department Comprehensive Examination Coordinator  
at least 48 hours prior to the examination due date.*

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Specialty area (e.g., FNP, AGACNP): \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for deadline extension request: \_\_\_\_\_

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Requested extension date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix V: Petition Requesting Oral Exam**

*To be submitted to the Department Comprehensive Examination Coordinator*

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Specialty area (e.g., FNP, AGACNP): \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for requesting oral exam option: \_\_\_\_\_

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## **Appendix VI: Descriptions of Comprehensive Examination Formats**

### **Problem Solving Proposal:**

Student constructs a proposal for addressing a problem specific to advanced nursing practice or a healthcare setting. Elements of the problem-solving proposal include: statement of the problem and its context; background and significance of the problem; theoretical or conceptual framework guiding the literature review and proposed solution; systematic review of literature relevant to the topic or problem; synthesis and analysis of the literature reviewed; proposed solution for the problem that addresses feasibility, realism, and defensibility of the solution or intervention; proposed implementation and evaluation plan.

### **Critical Literature Review:**

Student constructs a review of the literature and evidence pertaining to a selected topic or problem in nursing. Elements of the critical literature review include: statement of the problem or purpose of the literature review; background and significance of the problem; theoretical or conceptual framework for organizing the literature review; systematic review of literature relevant to the topic or problem; synthesis and analysis of the literature reviewed including perceived gaps; application of the literature review and findings to advanced nursing practice; and proposed directions for future research.

### **Research Proposal:**

Student constructs a research proposal that includes: purpose of the study; research question to be addressed; background and significance of the problem; conceptual framework for the proposed study; critical literature review relevant to the research question; proposed study design methodology; target study sample and recruiting plan; proposed materials, procedures, instruments (including validity and reliability); data analysis plan, resources needed; and projected limitations of the study.

### **White Paper:**

Student constructs a white paper that provides a comprehensive analysis of a specific health policy issue/problem or set of conditions involving a target population. Elements of the white paper include: presentation of the health policy issue or problem; significance of the problem or issue to key stakeholders; importance to advanced nursing practice; review of the theoretical or conceptual framework underlying the problem or issue; critical review and synthesis of relevant evidenced-based literature; proposed policy decision or solution for problem or issue that addresses feasibility, cost, evaluation or procedure for selected intervention; and clear recommendations for implementing the solution.