Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Examination (CPCE)

WHAT STUDENTS NEED TO KNOW

The CPCE is a four-hour exit examination required of all OPS MSCP students at CBU. 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 OPS MSCP Program in developing/adapting curriculum. In addition to the CPCE questions, OPS MSCP students will need to complete several clinical vignette questions that assess law/ethics, diagnosing, and treatment planning.

BENEFITS OF USING THE CPCE

- Allows the OPS MSCP Program to better meet psychometric standards.
- Gives the OPS MSCP Program an objective view of the knowledge level of their students.
- Allows the OPS MSCP Program to examine student functioning in various curricular areas.
- Promotes longitudinal self-study.
- Compares the OPS MSCP Program’s results to national data.
- Stimulates student integration of knowledge learned in separate courses.
- Gives students comparative strength/weakness feedback.

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 covers 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. (PSY 510)
2. **Social and cultural foundations** – studies that provide an understanding of issues and trends in a multicultural and diverse society. (PSY 500, PSY 590)
3. **Helping relationships** – studies that provide an understanding of counseling and consultation processes. (PSY 501, PSY 502, PSY 505, PSY 515, PSY 525, PSY 545, PSY 580, PSY 585, PSY 597a, PSY 597b, PSY 597c, PSY 598a)
4. **Group work** – studies that provide an understanding of group development, dynamics, counseling theories, group counseling methods and skills, and other group work approaches. (PSY 520)
5. **Career and lifestyle development** – studies that provide an understanding of career development and related life factors. (PSY 510, PSY 537)
6. **Appraisal** – studies that provide an understanding of individual and group approaches to assessment and evaluation. (PSY 540)
7. **Research and program evaluation** – studies that provide an understanding of types of research methods, basic statistics, and ethical and legal considerations in research. (PSY 530)
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. (PSY 501, PSY 502, PSY 560, PSY 597a, PSY 597b, PSY 597c)

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. As noted above, in addition to the CPCE questions, OPS MSCP students will need to complete several clinical vignette questions that assess law/ethics, diagnosing, and treatment planning.
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 OPS MSCP Program’s students as well as national data. 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.

Students on the marriage and family therapy (MFT) track of the OPS MSCP Program will need to take seven of the eight subtests (i.e., excluding the Career and Lifestyle Development section) of the CPCE, and students on the licensed professional clinical counselor (LPCC) track will need to take all eight subtests of the CPCE. Both MFT and LPCC students will need to complete the additional clinical vignette questions, which cover law/ethics, diagnosing, and treatment planning.

Students will have four hours to complete the CPCE, and an hour to complete the clinical vignette questions.

PASS/FAILURE OF THE EXAM

The CPCE will be offered at the beginning of the last semester of the OPS MSCP Program. Students will be notified if they passed the CPCE and vignette portion of the exam via mail within approximately two weeks of the exam date. Students who fail the exam must take it again within the next two months in order to graduate. Students will only need to retake the section(s) of the exam that were not passed the first time. Students who fail the exam two times will need to meet with the Director of the OPS MSCP Program to devise an individual assessment plan to address any remaining deficiencies. The CPCE national norms are used to determine the minimum passing score for each of the eight sections of the exam. The minimum passing score varies each year and is based on one standard deviation below the national mean.
ELIGIBILITY AND REGISTRATION FOR THE CPCE

In order to be eligible for the CPCE, students must have completed all the core courses prior to the last semester of the OPS MSCP Program and be in good academic standing. The CPCE costs $50 per student. Students can make checks payable to CCE the day of testing, with the payments sent in to CCE with the scoring sheets. Checks that do not clear may delay students’ scores from being released to the OPS MSCP Program, and, thus, delay graduation.

Students will be notified via email and on the OPS MSCP website that they must pass the CPCE and vignette questions in order to graduate from the OPS MSCP program. The exam will be administered via booklet and Scantron format at an OPS-approved location at the beginning of the last semester of the program, which will give students who do not pass the opportunity to retake the test a second time in the last semester of the program. Students who do not live near the CBU campus will need to arrange for alternative proctoring on a case-by-case basis.

STUDY GUIDES

Listed below are two resources representative of the study materials available that offer preparation materials. The OPS MSCP Program does not endorse any one set of preparation materials.


http://www.amazon.com/Mastering-Counselor-Preparation-Comprehensive-Counseling/dp/0137017502