

# **COUNSELOR PREPARATION COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION (CPCE) WHAT STUDENTS NEED TO KNOW**

The comprehensive exam is an exit examination required of all Clinical Mental Health and School Counseling Master's degree students at LIU Post and LIU Brentwood. 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.

## **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 limited published study materials available for the CPCE; however, the exam content is similar to the NBCC National Counselor Examination.

### **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.

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.

### **FAILURE OF THE EXAM**

It is recommended that students take the exam the semester before graduation. Students who fail the exam must take the exam again the following semester in order to graduate. A subsequent failure will postpone graduation. Students who are unsuccessful in passing the CPCE after two attempts will be administered a written department exam. Questions on the department examination will be developed utilizing the eight common core areas designated by CACREP.

### **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 the CEIT Portal <http://ceit.liu.edu/CSD/CounsDev.html> or from the Department of Counseling & Development office. Students must apply a minimum of one month prior to the administration date of the exam. The exam is taken the semester before the student is to graduate. A student graduating in May would take the exam in the fall semester.

## **CPCE AND THE NCE**

The NCE is the National Counselor Exam. The NCE is offered throughout the year at various locations and is an optional exam. The CPCE is a required exam given by LIU Post and LIU Brentwood to its students. You must pass this exam in order to graduate. The exams are similar in content and are offered around the same time each year.

For students who are graduating from a CACREP accredited program: If you take and pass the National Counselor Examination (NCE), upon graduation you are a National Certified Counselor (NCC). In many states, the NCE exam is the licensing exam. If you take and pass the NCE, once you accumulate your hours toward licensure in these states, you are then licensed - no additional exam is required. New York, however, does not use this exam for purposes of licensure; New York State uses the National Clinical Mental Health Counseling Examination (NCMHCE) for licensure. In addition, satisfactory performance on this examination will enable a candidate to become a National Certified Counselor (NCC) without having to take the National Counselor Examination (NCE). Much more information may be found on the National Board for Certified Counselors website at [www.nbcc.org](http://www.nbcc.org)

## **STUDY GUIDES**

There are several choices to choose from when selecting a study guide for the CPCE. You might want to decide if you would also like to study for the NCE since the content is so similar and materials help to prep for both exams. Listed below are two resources representative of the study materials available that offer preparation materials. The Department does not endorse any one set of preparation materials.

- 1) Academic Review provides preparation materials for the NCE. The CPCE is drawn from the same type of questions. [www.academicreview.com](http://www.academicreview.com).
- 2) Mastering the National Counselor Examination (NCE) and the counselor preparation comprehensive examination (CPCE) by Bradley T. Erford.