Public Policy and Administration | West Chester University
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To: DPA Students
Date: March 29, 2021
Re: Comprehensive Exam: Study Strategy Guide

The DPA Comprehensive Exam consists of free response questions that cover the administrative core and methods sequence. The exam is open book, and all students are expected to reference and cite materials in support of their answers.

The faculty of the Public Policy and Administration Department have compiled the below study strategies for the DPA comprehensive exam. We urge students to consider this guide as a non-exhaustive list of strategies. Students are encouraged to contact their faculty advisor and/or the DPA Program Director for further discussion.

- Keep all of your books, notes and course materials in a safe place so that you have them accessible for the exam.
- Develop a system for organizing your course materials so you can easily access them while you are writing your exam.
- Prepare a study and reading list. Be sure to include topics from all required DPA courses (DPA 700-707), but you should add your own topics as well.
- Practice developing research designs. Consider questions such as: what methods will you use and why? How will you use the results of your analysis to answer the research question?
- Develop a schedule for the testing window that allows sufficient time for outlining, drafting, writing, and editing your answers. Time management is key.
- Make sure you answer the question and all components.
- Try to limit your answers to the question, narrow your scope, and stay on topic.
- Think about the relationships among the course materials and how you can synthesize that information in your exam answers.