

Qualifying Exam Guide GSSW PhD Program

There will be 3 sections of the exam. You will have approximately 2-3 hours per section. The exam must be completed within the allotted timeframe. No notes will be allowed.

Statistics exam

- The statistics exam includes approximately 15 multiple choice and short answer items.
- The exam will assess your understanding of key constructs (e.g., statistical significance, transformations, centering), your ability to select appropriate analyses, and your ability to interpret output provided to you.
- You will not conduct analyses during the exam.
- There are minimal equations, and those items that do include equations provide the equation for you and ask for you to apply the equation to reach an estimate.
- The remainder of the exam includes a scenario in which you will select appropriate analyses to conduct and will interpret output.

Intervention exam

- You will be given a scenario that describes a setting, population and intervention to be tested.
- You will be asked to articulate research questions, hypotheses, and the types of background literature you would review to inform your study.
- You will be asked to select and describe a research design and your rationale for choosing that design.
- You will be asked to name one outcome, describe how you would measure that outcome, and how you would assure its psychometric properties.
- Finally, you will describe, in detail, your plan for analyzing the data in your study to answer your research questions.
- While there are many possible right answers to this section of the exam, you should focus on accurately and clearly explaining your methods and your justification for selecting these methods.

Mixed methods exam

- You will be given a scenario that describes a topic that you want to understand better for a given social work population and setting.
- For each section of this exam, you will reference 1) a quantitative strand, 2) a qualitative strand, and 3) the overall mixed methods study design and analysis.
- In doing so, you will develop research questions and articulate a research design, sampling strategies, data collection methods, data analysis plan/approach, and identify potential ethical issues that could arise.
- You will be asked to provide a clear rationale for each decision that you make.
- You will be asked to articulate the strengths and limitations of the approaches you choose.