

Comprehensive Examination Guidelines

A good comprehensive examination answer should exhibit strength in three areas.

Conceptual Skills

Relevant theories are identified and used as support, where appropriate.
Recognizes current state of knowledge and theory in a broad area of research
distinguishing between what is known and what would be desirable to know
Provides careful consideration of what would take to address current gaps in the literature.
When appropriate, answer goes beyond information in clinical psychology. Because most
problems do not respect disciplinary boundaries, good answers integrate across areas
These areas might be animal work, cognitive psychology, social psychology,
neuroscience, computer science... even meteorology if your math is really that good (gn loe)

Answer demonstrates understanding of internal validity issues (research design,
measurement issues) in research.
Answer demonstrates understanding of external validity (generalizability, maintenance)
in research.
It able to identify and articulate methodological advances that would help strengthen a
body of research

Writing Skills

Ideas are integrated by theme and idea, not simply "stacking" or list of studies.
Demonstrates good organization, as evidenced by clear flow between paragraphs
Uses appropriate headings and subheadings to further organize text.
Ideas were focused and easy to follow logically
Conclusions are appropriately supported with theory or research; speculations are clearly
marked as such.
Proper use of in-text citations
Ideas are expressed efficiently; no needless redundancy.
Answer uses correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation