



UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS

MSOM COMPREHENSIVE EXAM OUTLINE

Successful completion of a comprehensive examination is one of the final steps toward earning the Master of Science in Operations Management degree. The comprehensive exam is a tool for evaluating each student to verify that he/she has achieved a sufficient level of knowledge and expertise in the Operations Management curriculum to be awarded the MSOM degree. The exam also serves as an assessment of the effectiveness of both the teaching in the program as well as curriculum content.

EXAM FORMAT & EXPECTATIONS

The MSOM oral comprehensive exam will follow the standardized format listed below. The entire exam will be scheduled for 45 minutes.

1. Student PowerPoint presentation that is 8-10 minutes (Must be at least 8 minutes and no more than 10 minutes).

Your presentation should outline the following:

- a. Previous education: institution, major, special projects
 - b. Professional work experience
 - c. Coursework concepts used in case studies, class projects, or work that address each of the 7 program outcomes (program outcomes are listed on page 2 of this study guide).
 - d. How the MSOM program, its curriculum, and the ten Operations Management decisions will fit into career plans or has complemented current or past work
2. The committee of 3-4 MSOM graduate faculty members will follow-up with questions to the student that focus on information that was not completely and effectively presented. These follow-up questions will probe for more specific information on a given subject or program outcome that was not completely covered in the presentation.
 3. The student will be graded on his or her understanding of the program outcomes and a pass or fail grade will be awarded the day the exam is taken.

EXAM PREP

To prepare for the exam, students should review the main ideas from each course and how they relate to the 7 MSOM program outcomes. It is very helpful to keep textbooks and notes for each class. Some useful review techniques include re-reading class notes; making an outline of principal concepts from each course; preparing a glossary of key terms, theories, and leaders/ideas in specific fields. It is also helpful to review the [Course Descriptions and Objectives](#) from the courses you have taken.



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MSOM PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Operations Management graduates should be able to:

1. Apply the skills and techniques required to lead and manage complex global operations involving processes, technology, and people.
5623, 5003, 5113, 5133, 5143, 5253, 5303, 5373, 5423, 5733, 5823, 5873, 5993
2. Design plans and controls to create value through strategic, tactical, and operational change. 5623, 5003, 5633, 5873
3. Design plans and controls to lead and manage multi-disciplinary projects.
5783 & 5983
4. Identify problems, analyze alternatives, and design solutions considering financial, environmental, and societal impact.
5003, 5123/5463, 5013, & 5993
5. Use quantitative techniques and models to analyze data to support decision-making.
5003, 5123/5463, 5783,, 5613, 5673, 5373, 5433, 5443, 5503, 5833
6. Assess legal, regulatory, professional, and ethical corporate and individual responsibilities. 5623, 5403, 5113, 5143, 5253, 5303
7. Write and present to stakeholders and senior decision makers.
5623, 5783, 5443, 5983, & 5993

SAMPLE FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS

The questions below from OMGT 5783—Project Management offer an example of the type of questions that might be posed and how the subsequent discussion might evolve:

Q: Describe the critical path and its role in the management of a project.

A: The critical path is the longest path to completion of a project. There is no slack in the activities on the critical path. While critical path activities are underway, other, non-sequential tasks can be performed concurrently. Following the critical path allows time for completion of all activities of a project. Successful project management depends upon correctly defining the critical path and ensuring that all steps along it are completed on schedule.

Q: What happens if completion of a critical path task is delayed?



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A: Completion of the entire project is delayed; the entire project falls behind schedule.

Q: What can be done to make up delay time and what are the advantages/disadvantages of such action?

A: If necessary, a critical path activity can be “crashed”, meaning extra resources can be poured into it to shorten its completion time. The advantage is that crashing gets the project back on schedule, but the disadvantage is that it adds to the project cost.

Q: How would a project manager go about determining whether it is more feasible to permit a schedule delay or to accelerate a critical path operation?

A: The PM can conduct a cost/benefit analysis for each scenario to determine which approach is more advantageous.

Q: Other than actual dollars lost on getting a project back on track (or delaying its completion), what does the PM risk by crashing to stay on schedule (or postponing project completion)?

A: Crashing can burn out your people, leading to turnover of key team members. The PM may also get a reputation for poor planning and wasting company resources. Project delay carries the risk of eroding a PM’s credibility with management and the customer.

COMP EXAM STEPS SUMMARY

- 1) **Apply** for comp exam on the MSOM website.
- 2) Once your eligibility is confirmed, you’ll receive an email from your advisor, notifying you that you’ve been added to a course in blackboard: MSOM Comp Exam (XYZ Semester). In the BB Course, you will find detailed instructions for your comprehensive exam, including how to create and upload your Kaltura video presentation and PowerPoint. You’ll also find instructions for what to do on the day of your scheduled exam.
- 3) Prepare and **upload your PowerPoint presentation and Kaltura video to Blackboard.** Your exam cannot be scheduled until your materials have been uploaded to the Blackboard Course and reviewed by the committee.
- 4) Once your video and PowerPoint presentation have been reviewed and accepted by the Comp Exam Review Committee, you’ll receive an email from the department’s Comp Exam Scheduler to **schedule your exam date/time.** Exam times are available on a first come, first served basis.



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- 5) **On the day and time of your scheduled exam**, log in to Blackboard and click “Click Here on your Test Day.” Follow the instructions there to access your Collaborate Session and begin your comprehensive exam.
- 6) The committee will have viewed your presentation and video, and they will ask you questions about the material you covered, as well as anything they would like you to elaborate further on.
- 7) You will receive a pass/fail grade notification on the day you finish the exam.

OTHER HELPFUL HINTS

- **Dress Code:** There is not required dress code for the exam, but most students dress in Business Casual Attire, Military uniform, or even a suit and tie.
- **Earbuds:** Please have some form of headset or earbuds nearby in case of audio issues.
- **Test Time:** Be sure to be logged in to blackboard and in your Collaborate session about 5-10 minutes prior to your scheduled exam time. Exams are scheduled for 45 minutes each.
- **If you have questions:** Contact your Site Advisor

BEST OF LUCK ON YOUR COMPREHENSIVE EXAM!