LIS Comprehensive Examination Guide

The following general guidelines are designed to help students prepare for the comprehensive examination, which is a research paper.

Please carefully read the below Web pages about LIS comps and the important procedures to take comprehensive examination.

LIS Comps webpage: http://lis.cua.edu/courses/comps/
LIS Comps Procedure: http://lis.cua.edu/courses/comps/procedures.cfm

Contents

Faculty pointers for successfully passing your LIS comprehensive exams

Expectations on a take-home exam format

Students are expected to present their ideas in a professional manner, using graphs, models, tables, etc. as appropriate. The comps exam paper should NOT be a literature review paper. The paper should demonstrate competencies required by the question and reflect learning from coursework, knowledge of the literature, analytical ability, and ability to synthesize knowledge or ideas from various sources.

Reading list:

1. Locate the most recent syllabi for the core courses published on the "LIS course schedules" section of the LIS website. If more than one professor taught the course, then favor the most current syllabus written by full time faculty (i.e., faculty with offices in the law school). The textbooks and bibliographies from those four syllabi should constitute the start of your comps "reading list."
2. Spend some time reading recent journal articles. Look for current trends and topics covered in the four core courses. Try to find articles that supplement your textbooks, and fill in any gaps in your knowledge. See the list of journals below for more information.
3. Reread the items on your reading list with the goal to identify the:
   - main points of each document and
   - relevance of each document to its particular core course and LIS competencies
   - relevance of each document to at least one other LIS course (core or non-core)

Practice writing answers:

1. Locate a sample question or past comp question published in the "Comprehensive Exam" section of the LIS Web site. Begin your practice by writing outlined answers and ask your advisor or one of the other full-time faculty to review it.
2. When writing your answer remember to:

   a. answer the question
   b. answer all parts of the question, if it's a multi-part question
   c. clearly state your answer and your evidence to support your answer by citing to the appropriate literature.

3. After you have gained confidence in writing a logical outline, then practice writing a paper.

Strategies during exam days

1. Plan out how much time you will spend on each section of the paper. It would be good to allocate your exam period including a preparation time before you begin writing a paper answering the question and a proofreading period at the end. This will give you a chance to look for minor errors and to review what you have written.

2. In the beginning, have moments to write down thoughts or ideas that you may have in response to the question. This pre-work will give you direction and focus in your writing. This will be helpful to improve the clarity and flow of your paper.
3. Organize your paper. An outline will help to organize your thoughts and make sure you address to each part of the question asked.
4. Gather and make a list of all the relevant materials and sources that you plan to include in your paper.
5. Have a thesis statement for each part and state it up front.
6. Take breaks. Writing can be exhausting. Try to schedule short breaks during exam days.
7. Proofread for meaning and mechanics.

A well-written (analytical) research paper

- Be sure to begin with an introduction.
  - Usually, an introduction includes a thesis statement which contains several meaningful propositions that would then be argued in the body of the paper. In the body, each proposition will be discussed in detail with appropriate evidence.
- Directly addresses the question.
- Demonstrates knowledge and an understanding of the theoretical/accepted principles in Library and Information Science (LIS) in answering the question.
- Demonstrates knowledge of current trends and issues in professional practice.
  - Do not merely assert that such and such a problem or issue is important. Instead, make an explicit assertion about the nature of the subject and indicate why and how you will approach the subject.
- Clearly identifies a set of key concepts that are derived appropriately from and connected to citations.
- Derives its central arguments and supporting evidence from citations from scholarly journals/sources in their respective area rather than using your personal experience. Having references demonstrates that your findings/argument mainly results from credible sources/facts beyond your personal experience. By doing so, you will show a reader why the points you are making are valid.
  - It would be okay to provide examples of personal experience within a larger context of the paper as a supplementary example. When you do so, it must be anonymous.
- Has an overall structure that is clear and appropriate to the topic.
  - You may use subheadings to organize your writing.
- Contains a section of summary conclusions that are consistent with paper's thesis statement. Also, your conclusions should reflect your own thoughts or interpretation on the subject matter.
- Employs APA style consistently and appropriately.
- Formats the bibliography properly using APA.
  - A minimum of 8 sources from peer-reviewed scholarly journal articles or books are required.
  - Additional sources such as Web sites, blog postings, news articles, and professional magazine articles may also be used and formatted in APA.
- Is easy to read and understand.
- Is free of major grammatical, typographical, and syntactical errors.
- Contains a complete and accurate list of references that match between paper and bibliography.

Reference on writing an analytical research paper
Purdue's guideline
http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/658/1/
http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/658/02/
http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/658/05/

A list of Journals for Readings

Do not feel that you have to read all of the journals on this list. Also, do not restrict your studying to solely items listed here. The following journals usually contain material that is relevant to the core LIS courses.

American Archivist
American Libraries (ALA)
Bulletin of the American Society for Information Science and Technology
College and Research Libraries
First Monday
Information Outlook (SLA)
Information Technology and Libraries
JASIST
Journal of Academic Librarianship
Journal of Academic Libraries
Libraries and the Cultural Record
Library Journal
Library Quarterly
Library Resources and Technical Services
Library Trends
Portal: Libraries and the Academy
RUSQ

Use online databases in our fields via CUA libraries, e.g., LISA, ERIC, Academic Search Premier, etc. (http://guides.lib.cua.edu/libsci). By searching those databases, you will be able to identify relevant topics and related articles to read.

CHECKLIST

❑ Students will choose one question to answer.

❑ Essay will be between 2,000 and 2,500 words long, excluding bibliography and cover page.

❑ The text document should be formatted as follows: 12 pt. font, double-spaced, 1-in. margins. Files should be saved according to an established file naming convention and in one of the selected file formats (doc, docx or pdf).

> ❑ Your filename must be in the format "<your test ID>-Question<#>.doc" (or docx or pdf). For example:
>
> Say if your I.D. number was 205 and you answered question #1, then you would submit your file as: 205-Q1.doc, e.g.

❑ Do not include your name.

❑ Essay must have in-text citation in APA style.

❑ Essay must have a finalized bibliography on a separate page (with all sources used in your text) in proper APA format / sources listed in alphabetical order by author's last name. You must have a minimum of 8 sources

❑ Essay will be submitted online via Blackboard (one file with everything) by 9 a.m. on Monday

Expectations and policies

ACADEMIC HONESTY, PLAGIARISM, and CHEATING
http://graduatestudies.cua.edu/currentstudents/academintgrt.cfm

Academic honesty is expected of all CUA students. Academic honesty is one of the foundations of the educational mission and Catholic commitment of this university. Academic dishonesty, including such practices as cheating, plagiarism and fabrication, undermines the learning experience, and, as it involves fraud and deceit, is corrosive of the intellectual principles and is inconsistent with the ethical standards of this university. In the context of graduate studies, the expectations for academic honesty are greater, and therefore the presumed sanction for dishonesty is likely to be more severe, e.g., expulsion.

Categories of Academic Dishonesty

The following are the major categories of academic dishonesty:

A. Plagiarism is the act of presenting the work or methodology of another as if it were one's own. It includes quoting, paraphrasing, summarizing or utilizing the published work of others without proper acknowledgment, and, where appropriate, quotation marks. Most frequently, it involves the unacknowledged use of published books or articles in periodicals, magazines, newspapers and electronic media. However, any unacknowledged use of another's words, ideas or electronic processes constitutes plagiarism, including the use of papers written by other students, oral presentations, interviews, radio or TV broadcasts, any published or unpublished materials (including Web-based materials, letters, pamphlets, leaflets, notes or other electronic or print documents), and any unauthorized or inadequately credited use of foreign language, scientific and/or mathematical calculation and/or modeling programs or online services.

B. Improper use of one's own work is the unauthorized act of submitting work for a course that includes work done for previous courses and/or projects as though the work in question were newly done for the present course/project.

C. Fabrication is the act of artificially contriving or making up material, data or other information and submitting this as fact.

D. Cheating is the act of deceiving, which includes such acts as receiving or communicating or receiving information from another during an examination, looking at another's examination (during the exam), using notes when prohibited during examinations, using electronic equipment to receive or communicate information during examinations, using any unauthorized electronic equipment during examinations, obtaining information about the questions or answers for an examination prior to the administering of the examination or whatever else is deemed contrary to the rules of fairness, including special rules designated by the professor in the course.

E. Attempts to engage in any of the conduct described above or the facilitation of any of this conduct by another individual will be treated as conduct constituting academic dishonesty for purposes of this policy.

Please review the complete texts of the University policy and procedures regarding Student Academic Dishonesty, including requirements for appeals, at http://policies.cua.edu/academicundergrad/integrityfull.cfm.

Accommodations for students with disabilities: Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the school privately to discuss specific needs. Please contact Disability Support Services (at 202 319-5211, room 201 Pryzbyla Center) to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. To read about the services and policies, please visit the website: http://dss.cua.edu/.

Citation Instruction

Example (in-text citation):

Wang and Lim (2009) identified trendy features of next-generation catalog systems including relevance ranking, federated searching, faceted navigation, spell checking, RSS feeds, and interoperability and social networking services such as tagging, reviews, ratings, and recommendations.

<div align="center">Or</div>

There are trendy features of next-generation catalog systems, including relevance ranking, federated searching, faceted navigation, spell checking, RSS feeds, and interoperability and social networking services such as tagging, reviews, ratings, and recommendations (Wang & Lim, 2009).
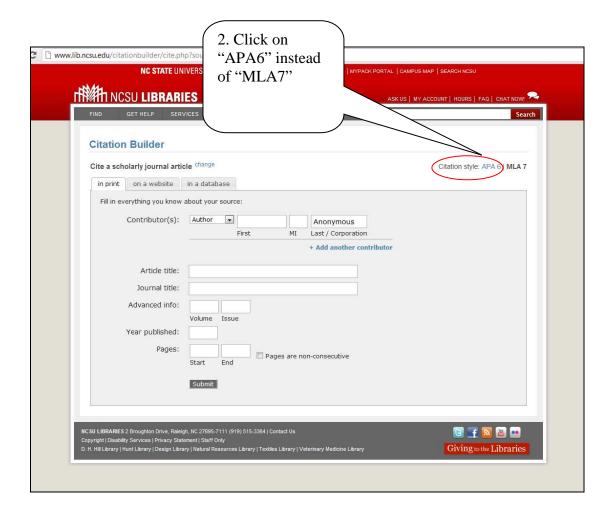
Bibliography: At the end of the paper is a listing of all the works cited
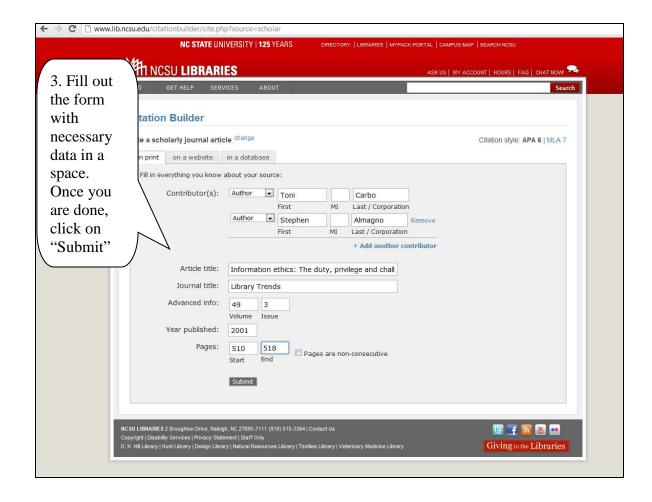
Wang, J. & Lim, A. (2009). Local touch and global reach: the next generation of newtork-level information discovery and delivery services in a digital landscape. *Library Management, 30*(1-2), 25-34.
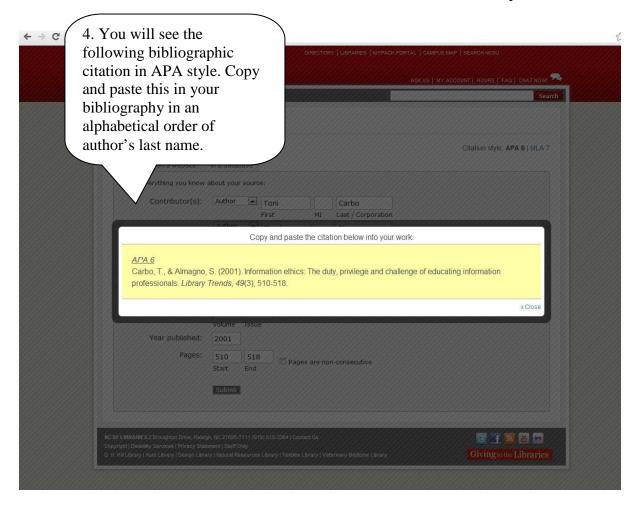
Resources for APA Citation

1. Tools you can use to create a bibliography in APA style
Citation Builder http://www.lib.ncsu.edu/citationbuilder/

2. Click on "APA6" instead of "MLA7"

3. Fill out the form with necessary data in a space. Once you are done, click on "Submit"

Carbo, T., & Almagno, S. (2001). Information ethics: The duty, privilege and challenge of educating information professionals. *Library Trends*, *49*(3), 510-518.

(Another tool)
RefWorks – freely available via CUA libraries (you need to create your personal account with RefWorks in advance.) https://www.aladin.wrlc.org/Z-WEB/Aladin?req=db&key=PROXYAUTH&lib=6&url=http://www.refworks.com/refworks2/?r=authentication::init&groupcode=RWCatholicUofA

2. *Resources for APA style*

* Sample reference page: http://www2.lib.unc.edu/instruct/citations/index.html?section=apa
* In-text citation http://www2.lib.unc.edu/instruct/citations/index.html?section=apa&page=2
* Print sources http://www2.lib.unc.edu/instruct/citations/index.html?section=apa&page=3
* Online source http://www2.lib.unc.edu/instruct/citations/index.html?section=apa&page=4
* Purdue OWL guide http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/
* http://www2.liu.edu/cwis/cwp/library/workshop/citapa.htm

Grading Comprehensive Examination Essay

In grading the exam, the faculty looks for an understanding of core concepts, adequate knowledge of facts, and the application of principles and problem-solving skills in library and information science fields and profession.

Faculty members will evaluate the essay using the rubric below. Although faculty evaluates the essay with the rubric, the goal is to reach a holistic judgment regarding the piece of work as a whole. The essay will receive pass or fail.

LIS Comprehensive Examination Essay Rubric

Criterion	Fails to Meet Expectations (1)	Meets Expectations (2)	Exceeds Expectations (3)
Demonstrated understanding of relevant information, principles and concepts	Response demonstrates unsatisfactory knowledge and understanding of required courses and issue(s)/problem(s) raised in the question. There are major inconsistencies and/or inaccuracies; overall knowledge is unsatisfactory. Fails to provide or provides impractical solution, opinion, or analysis to issue(s)/problem(s) raised in the question	Response demonstrates satisfactory knowledge and understanding of required courses in regard to issue(s)/problem(s) raised in the question. There may be minor inconsistencies and/or inaccuracies; however, overall knowledge is satisfactory. Provides basic but practical solution, opinion, and/or analysis to issue(s)/problem(s) raised in the question	Response demonstrates superior knowledge and understanding of required courses in regard to issue(s)/problem(s) raised in the question – and in the broader LIS context. Provides thoughtful and detailed solution, opinion, and/or analysis
Demonstrated ability to apply relevant theories, principles and concepts appropriately in response to the question	Response demonstrates inappropriate application of theoretical and/or professional principles and concepts to the question. Response fails to apply any theoretical and/or professional principles to the question	Response demonstrates satisfactory application of the appropriate theoretical and/or professional principles and concepts to the question. Some connections may be unclear or in appropriate – but overall application is satisfactory	Response demonstrates superior application of the appropriate theoretical and/or professional principle(s) and concepts to the question
Demonstrated ability to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate relevant principles in response to the question	Response does not provide sufficient synthesis or analysis of ideas. Conclusion does not adequately support ideas raised in the question	Response demonstrates satisfactory ability to analyze, synthesize and evaluate critical and relevant information. Response may or may not demonstrate an understanding of theoretical and/or professional principles in a broader LIS context	Response demonstrates superior ability to analyze, synthesize and evaluate critical, relevant, and consistent connections from theoretical principles to practice

Ability to locate and retrieve relevant, appropriate, and authoritative information	Response demonstrates inadequate integration of information literacy skills, inadequate use of primary and secondary sources and citations. Response fails to utilize the literature to support/strengthen discussion. References are incomplete and there are significant errors using APA	Response demonstrates adequate evidence of broad information literacy skills including a variety of primary and secondary sources. In most cases student integrates relevant research, demonstrates understanding and uses it appropriately (quantitative evidence, quotations etc.) Cites to a sufficient number of sources correctly throughout most of the essay. Complete and correctly cited references using APA – There may be instances of minor inaccuracies in citation and in application of the sources	Response successfully integrates information literacy skills, demonstrates superior understanding and uses it appropriately (quantitative evidence, quotations etc. Uses a variety of appropriate primary and secondary sources showing different perspectives. Complete and correctly cited references using APA
Ability to analyze and synthesize the information found	Response does not provide sufficient synthesis or analysis of ideas of information located. Conclusion does not adequately support ideas	Response demonstrates adequate conclusions that show an analysis and synthesis of ideas and information. Some of the conclusions are not supported in the literature review or other information sources	Response demonstrates succinct and precise conclusions that show a superior analysis and synthesis of ideas based on the information located from the and other sources
Ability to communicate clearly and effectively in writing, with use of graphical elements if appropriate	Response is poorly organized and lacks focus/clarity. Discussion is difficult to follow. Fails to demonstrate the satisfactory written communication skills	Response is satisfactorily organized & intelligible, although there may be minor issues with flow and/or organization. Demonstrates satisfactory to good written communication skills	Response is well organized and flows logically. The answer is clearly written, easy to understand, and demonstrates superior written communication skills