Metropolitan State University of Denver

Master of Health Administration Comprehensive Examination Study Guide

Definition:

Competency: An observable ability of a health professional, integrating multiple components such as knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes. Since competencies are observable, they can be measured and assessed to ensure their acquisition. Competencies can be assembled like building blocks to facilitate progressive development (Frank, et al. 2010).

The competencies for the master's degree in health administration (MHA) graduate program have been established by MHA program leadership based on best practice established by the National Center for Healthcare Leadership.

Background:

The Master of Health Administration (MHA) program at MSU Denver incorporates comprehensive examinations as a vital component of its curriculum, serving as a mechanism to evaluate a student's mastery and synthesis of the broad knowledge base essential for effective healthcare administrative leadership. These examinations go beyond assessing mere recall of facts, instead challenging students to integrate concepts, apply theories, and critically analyze complex healthcare management scenarios encountered throughout their coursework. By requiring students to demonstrate a holistic understanding of the diverse domains within health administration – including finance, policy, ethics, operations, and strategy – the comprehensive exams ensure that graduates possess the well-rounded expertise necessary to navigate the multifaceted challenges of the healthcare industry and contribute meaningfully to organizational success. This evaluation not only upholds the academic integrity of the MHA program but also enhances the value of the degree by signifying that graduates have achieved a comprehensive and integrated understanding of the field, setting them apart as highly competent and well-prepared professionals ready to lead and innovate in healthcare organizations.

Examination Process:

1. Written examination
   a. Timed assessment through Peregrine Global Services.
   b. Currently there are 110 questions. You will have three minutes to complete each question.
   c. Questions are multiple choice, T/F, matching, and/or fill in the blank.
   d. You must select "Record Answer" to proceed to the next question. Once you begin the assessment, you have **48 hours** to complete the assessment and *unlimited* login attempts are allowed.
   e. You are allowed **two 15-minute break(s)** during the assessment.
   f. You **cannot** go back and review previously answered/unanswered questions.
   g. Exam will be proctored.
2. Verbal Examination
   a. Components of exam
      i. Exam period
         1. Two weeks – No group study
      ii. Domains
         1. Students choose one area of interest based on current courses; faculty choose one area. (See example below)
         2. Faculty provides feedback and directs questions
      iii. Presentation to panel (Faculty, Alumni, Industry)
         1. Directed questions based on learning objectives
3. Grading (P/F)
   a. Pass With distinction
   b. Pass
   c. Pass with conditions
   d. Fail

MHA Oral Examination Example:

Population Health Management and Economics

Question:

"Imagine a mid-sized, urban health system serving a diverse population with a significant burden of chronic diseases, particularly type 2 diabetes and hypertension. The system is operating under a value-based care model, with a focus on reducing readmissions and improving population health outcomes.

Part 1 (Population Health Focus):

- "Describe the key population health interventions you would implement to address the high prevalence of these chronic diseases within this specific population. Consider factors such as social determinants of health, community engagement, and the role of interprofessional teams.
- "Discuss how you would measure the effectiveness of these interventions in terms of both clinical outcomes and health equity."

Part 2 (Economic Focus):

- "Analyze the economic implications of implementing these population health interventions from the perspective of the health system. Consider both the upfront investment costs and the potential return on investment (ROI) in terms of reduced healthcare utilization and improved patient outcomes.
- "How would you model the cost-effectiveness of your chosen interventions, and what data would you need to gather to support your analysis?
- "Discuss how the shift to value-based care incentivizes the health system to invest in these interventions, and how you would demonstrate the financial sustainability of your population health strategy to the organization's leadership."

Study Resources:

In addition to reviewing the course specific learning objectives, please review the following:

1. Review this study guide
2. Each course textbook and assignments
3. Literature reviews that were associated with your course work
4. Form study groups
5. Develop and share study material
6. If you have questions regarding content, set up advising with Faculty

MHA Courses and associated learning objectives:

MHA 5000 Fundamentals of Health Care Systems and Organizational Structures

Specific, Measurable Behavioral Learning Objectives:*
Upon completion of this course the student should be able to:
1. Analyze the evolution and current state of the health care delivery system.
2. Summarize roles and objectives of health care providers and systems by perspective.
3. Compare and contrast organizational structures within the health care delivery system.
4. Formulate action plans for health care organizations to manage changing legislation and regulations.
5. Distinguish technical and cultural changes within the health care delivery system by stakeholder perspective and health care organization types.
6. Anticipate the economic and political forces on health care organizations from differing perspectives.
7. Evaluate the evolving financing and payment changes from differing perspectives in the health care industry.
8. Prepare strategies to manage critical issues such as access, quality, utilization, and costs of healthcare via organization or system type.

MHA 5010 - Health Care Administration, Theory and Application, Governance, and Leadership

Specific, Measurable Behavioral Learning Objectives:*
Upon completion of this course the student should be able to:

1. Explain the role, responsibility and style of leaders in an organization and their relationship to governing boards, physicians, advisory panels, regulatory agencies and other government entities.
2. Examine governance and leadership and how they enhance or deter the performance of an organization.
3. Interpret the relationship among an organization's mission, vision, values and goals as documented in a strategic plan and the role of managers and leaders in devising and executing these. Create an approach for how organizational leaders achieve buy-in to the mission and vision, energize stakeholders, and sustain a shared commitment among employees.
4. Analyze organizational behavior in health care - management and leadership models, styles and theories and examine evidence-based approaches to leading an organization. Recommend competencies needed to lead an organization and paths to developing leaders.
5. Evaluate the cultural diversity of an organization and devise strategies to ensure employees represent the community or clientele and that the diverse need for services and products of the community or clientele is met. Create approaches to establish inclusiveness as part of the organizational culture.

6. Apply the principles and best practices of organizational behavior and change management to the health care industry and analyze new concepts and trends based on research in the health care industry.
7. Apply data analysis tools and techniques for improving organizational effectiveness and achieving organizational strategic goals.
8. Explain concepts related to organizational effectiveness and solve problems related to management issues within a group setting. In written and oral communications, evaluate motivation, ethics, conflict and negotiation, teamwork or other related issues.
9. Analyze your own situational leadership style. Develop a personal rationale-based administrative/management/leadership style for use in future career positions.
10. Critique cases of organizational leadership in the healthcare industry related to change management, excellence in governance, regulatory and policy changes, innovation, entrepreneurship, or high-quality operations or service provision.

MHA 5020 - Health Care Human Resources, Organizational Behavior, Change, and Development

Specific, Measurable Behavioral Learning Objectives:*
Upon completion of this course the student should be able to:

1. Determine fundamental human resource functions, principles, concepts, competencies, and theories.
2. Apply human resources management principles, concepts, competencies, and theories for problem solving and decision-making within the realm of the health care industry.
3. Evaluate human resource characteristics utilized for alignment of practices and integration of organizational strategy formulation, strategic initiatives, and implementation of a health care organization.
4. Assess the critical role human resources have on legal and regulatory policies and organized labor in the health care industry.
5. Develop an understanding of concepts and theories addressing organizational behavior and development pertaining to the health care industry
6. Apply the principles and best practices of organizational behavior, organizational development, and change management to the health care industry and analyze new concepts and trends based on research in the health care industry.
7. Justify the impact workforce innovation, forecasting, emotional intelligence, and diversity has on all health professionals and health care organizations.
8. Apply foundational techniques of managing workforce innovation and establishing employee engagement in health care organizations.
9. Expound the impact of diversity and inclusion in creating an effective diversity program in health care organizations.

MHA 5030 - Health Care Legal Principles, Compliance, and Ethics

Specific, Measurable Behavioral Learning Objectives:*
Upon completion of this course the student should be able to:

1. Analyze law and ethics in the health care arena.
2. Evaluate the law that surrounds health care as well as the levels of government where the law originates.
3. Assess licensure and its implications for health care as well as other pertinent laws that affect the health care practitioner.
4. Interpret and expound on the topic patient rights.
5. Differentiate the roles of providers as it applies to patient care and management.
6. Construct an outline to categorize legal principles surrounding tort and criminal laws and their sub-categories that affect health care decision-making.
7. Appraise HIPAA and define this act.
8. Compile a list of ethical issues that define health care law and support with case evidence.
9. Assess case law and determine methods for understanding and defining outcomes.
10. Summarize the numerous issues surrounding death and dying.
11. Model ethical considerations for the health care provider.
12. Defend a legal issue surrounding a legal/ethical issue in health care.

MHA 5040 - Population and Community Health

Specific, Measurable Behavioral Learning Objectives:*
Upon completion of this course the student should be able to:

Apply basic measures of population health status to contemporary health delivery perspectives of patient, provider, payer, and population;

1. Interpret the key elements of a health care delivery network and how such networks can be leveraged to improve the health status of a defined population or community;
2. Create an assessment of community health status using a variety of sources including disparate sources of data;
3. Design a needs (or gap) analysis to identify opportunities to improve performance on measures of health status;
4. Develop strategies to improve community health status using results of a community needs assessment;
5. Recommend strategies to address the unique health needs of specific populations such as the elderly, homeless, or those with behavioral health needs;

6. Explain the linkage between chronic illness and population health management strategies;
7. Combine the various data sources available through local health information exchanges to develop ongoing monitoring of community health status; and
8. Integrate population health management strategies into contemporary health care financing and insurer quality contracting mechanisms.

MHA 5050 - Seminar in Health Administration: Current Topics, Trends, Policy, and Sustainability

Specific, Measurable Behavioral Learning Objectives: *

Upon completion of this course the student should be able to:

1. Distinguish interest, industry, government, and stakeholder groups involved in affecting and creating health care administration policy.
2. Role-play communication, negotiation, and conflict resolution skills necessary to accommodate cultural change associated with changing health care administrative policy.
3. Defend sustainable aspects of the health care delivery system as it relates to health administration; specifically, aspects related to supporting behavioral change and institutional practices.
4. Debate the patient process, as well as administrative, components of population health and justify implications to differing perspectives of cost.
5. Argue differing perspectives of the current state of health care administration trends related to evolving payment structures including value-based movements.
6. Explain the meaning of theorized and applied personalized medicine along with the policy and ethical implications of its utilization,
7. Discriminate health technology tools and their trends from standards and terminologies; to decision support tools within the realm of health administration; specifically, students need to make evidence-based decisions justified by current policy
8. Defend a health technology-based tool to incorporate consumer and community-generated data towards current trends in health care administration.

MHA 5060 - Health Information Systems

Specific, Measurable Behavioral Learning Objectives:*
Upon completion of this course the student should be able to:

1. Analyze and define the various health care delivery perspectives: patient, provider, payer and population and the data gathered from each of those perspectives in the contemporary health care organization.

2. Interpret the concept of a normalized database and its utility in application to health care data management.
3. Explain the various applications used to collect data in a health care organization and associate each application with the data perspective they influence.
4. Apply knowledge of health care data to formulate plans to assess and remediate a health care management issue.
5. Critically analyze research literature to assess current uses of health information systems assets in improving the delivery of health care services.
6. Correlate the various sources of data in a health care organization with their use to improve operational performance.

MHA 5080 - Marketing and Strategy in the Health Industry

Specific, Measurable Behavioral Learning Objectives:*
Upon completion of this course the student should be able to:

1. Explain the process of developing the strategic plan and the relationship between the strategic plan and the marketing plan as well as financial planning (operational and long range).
2. Discuss the role of individuals in an organization in creating and executing the strategic and marketing plans.
3. Appraise the information (external and internal) that is needed to make strategic and marketing decisions.
4. Evaluate the difference between various strategic approaches such as a cost-leadership strategy, differentiation strategy, focus strategy on marketing, or a push and pull strategy.
5. Apply the principles of marketing (4Ps) in the health care industry.
6. Explain the methods of measuring customer satisfaction particularly for health service organizations.
7. Solve organizational issues and achieve strategic goals using marketing approaches, tools, and techniques
8. Interpret the role of advertising in marketing including social marketing and analyze the role of sales in achieving organizational goals.
9. Create strategic or marketing plans for an organization in the health care industry.
10. Analyze new concepts and trends in marketing and strategic planning in the health care industry.
11. Apply data analysis tools and techniques for improving the marketing process and achieving organizational strategic goals.
12. Discuss marketing and strategy related concepts and solve marketing related issues within a group setting.
13. Critique cases of marketing and strategy in the healthcare industry related to innovation, entrepreneurship, operations or service provision.

MHA - 5090 - Financial Analyses and Application in Health Care Organizations

Specific, Measurable Behavioral Learning Objectives:*
Upon completion of this course the student should be able to:

1. Differentiate between the key financial statements used in the management of health care organizations and describe the interrelationships between them;
2. Explain the impact of tax exemption on the operation of non-profit health care organizations
3. Contrast fixed and flexible operating budgeting methodologies and prepare budget variance analyses using both such budget methodologies for health care organizations;
4. Create a financial statement analysis using ratio calculations, and apply benchmarking standards as comparisons with recommendations for management action;[SEP]
5. Explain the various steps and processes in the health care revenue cycle and how to analyze and manage performance in this area;
6. Elaborate on the differences between the various reimbursement methods used in the health care industry and how they influence management decision-making; and
7. Construct a basic analysis of the payment terms of a provider contract and predict financial impacts of contract term changes.

MHA 5100 - Health Care Research Methods and Statistical Analysis

Specific, Measurable Behavioral Learning Objectives:*
Upon completion of this course the student should be able to:

1. Apply common descriptive statistical measures in a managerial and research context;
2. Evaluate differences in descriptive measures obtained in the course of research data analysis using Chi Squared and Student's t-test comparisons, as well as use of p-values;
3. Apply inferential techniques including correlation, linear regression, and logistic regression to evaluating health care research questions;
4. Appraise research literature to provide context and guidance for health services research work;
5. Select a research question, a hypothesis, and a decision rule for hypothesis acceptance for a health services research study;

6. Evaluate the human subject's protection challenges in health services research and identify strategies to mitigate risks to human research subjects;
7. Contrast primary and secondary data sources and apply them in a health services research project design; and
8. Create a complete and well-thought-out research design inclusive of a problem statement, review of literature, research question, hypothesis (with acceptance rule), analytical methods, expected results, and practical application.

MHA 5200 - Health Care Operations, Risk Management, and Quality Assessment and Improvement

Specific, Measurable Behavioral Learning Objectives:*
Upon completion of this course the student should be able to:

1. Develop an understanding of the complexity of health operations;
2. Use analytical tools and software such as MS Access and MS Excel to evaluate operational data for evaluation of efficiency, projection of volumes, alignment of resources with volume needs, and measurement of operational capacity;
3. Integrate operational performance with financial results in a health care organization;
4. Appraise and critically analyze a real-life health care organization and its operational efficiency challenges, and recommend an appropriate strategy for improvement;
5. Evaluate how process flows impact operational performance;
6. Formulate a plan for improving an organization's operations; and
7. Recommend mitigation strategies for business risks in a health care organization.

MHA 5300 - Health Economics

Specific, Measurable Behavioral Learning Objectives:*
Upon completion of this course the student should be able to:

1. Explain the fundamental microeconomic concepts that describe competitive markets, and the general concepts of supply, demand, utility, marginal analysis, and equilibrium as applied in a general industrial context;
2. Contrast the traditional concept of competitive markets as seen in other industries and how that concept of competition differs in health care markets;
3. Interpret the unique characteristics of demand in the health care field and apply different theories of health care demand in predicting consumer behavior in health care markets;
4. Predict the effects of health insurance, provider behavior, and consumer preferences on the volume of services provided in a health care market;

5. Judge the extent of market power among participants in a health care market and how such position will influence their economic behavior;
6. Apply different techniques of economic evaluation to decision challenges in the health care marketplace;
7. Interpret the unique factors that influence the supply of physician, nurse, and ancillary clinical labor resources in the health care industry; and
8. Appraise the public policy implications of economic behavior in health care markets.