

EXAMPLES OF PAST COMPREHENSIVE EXAM QUESTIONS

1. As a nutritionist, you are concerned about the relationship between diet, exercise, and the success rate of students on a college campus such as EIU. Develop a plan, based on the following items, which could be utilized to study this relationship.
 - a. Research questions/hypotheses, including definitions of your variables/terms
 - b. Population and /or sample
 - c. Data collection methods
 - d. Protection of student information (confidentiality)
 - e. Analysis – how might you analyze your results and answer your questions

You may make any assumptions that you wish about the situation, but include them in your response so that the readers are aware of them. You may also include additional components in your research plan (other than the 5 listed above) as you feel necessary. There are numerous ways to address this research topic, so do not focus on getting the one “right” answer, as there are numerous right answers.

2. A friend of yours is considering returning to school to pursue a master’s degree. After reviewing the program requirements at a few schools, she asks you “Why do I need to take a course in research methods? I don’t want to be a researcher, how could that course possibly help me?”
 - a. Provide a response to your friend’s question that describes the short-term (as a student) and long-term (career-related) benefits of a research methods course for a graduate student.
 - b. Compare and contrast the quantitative and qualitative approaches to research. Include in your response a brief discussion or an example of how the two approaches can complement each other (how they can work together).
3. You attend a professional presentation on obesity and television watching. The presenter surveyed 30 people (15 men and 15 women) from the Charleston community regarding their television viewing habits, weight, and eating habits. He calculated a correlation ($r = .21, p < .05$) between participants’ weight and the number of hours they watched TV on a weekly basis. He also reported that the mean weight for men was 264 lbs ($SD = 8.43$) and the mean weight for women was 189 lbs ($SD = 1.57$). He does not conduct a test to determine if the difference in weight is statistically different among men versus women. The presenter concludes the presentation by stating that watching TV causes weight gain in Charleston citizens and that men in Charleston weigh more than women in Charleston.
 - a. What is wrong with the presenter’s conclusions?
 - b. What does the difference in the sizes of the standard deviations for the mean weight among the men and women indicate?
 - c. Why is it important to always report a standard deviation when reporting a mean?
 - d. What limitations were present in the methodology of the study?
 - e. Discuss three specific recommendations you have for improving the study?
4. As a future dietitian, you need to be familiar with a variety of community agencies/ services that provide different services to your clients. Please describe at least four community agencies/services, including their target audience, services provided, and eligibility for receiving the services. What roles, as a FCS professional, might you have regarding these agencies?