

Comprehensive Exam – Day 2 - Sample

Instructions:

- The exam is designed to be 3 hours long, but you will have 4 hours to complete it
- Internet access is not allowed
- When completed, please save your work on the USB-key provided to you
- If you have provided any hand-written answers, please include your student number on ALL PAGES you submit
- Please make sure hand-written work is legible and the question number is clearly noted
- Please submit your paper copy of the exam questions upon completion
- Once receipt of your exam is confirmed, you are to destroy the electronic copy of your exam answers
- You are not permitted to discuss exam content with any other students until completion of the entire comprehensive exam week
- If you are unclear on exam questions/expectations, please ask an exam invigilator
- Your submission should be double spaced using 2.54 cm margins and 12pt Times New Roman font

You are encouraged to take the first 30-60 minutes to formulate your thoughts, thinking through the various elements of your proposal from start (research question) to finish (limitations), before you start writing.

QUESTION TOPIC - Healthiest Babies Possible Program

The Healthiest Babies Possible (HBP) program has been operating in Vancouver and Richmond since 1978. HBP is a free prenatal outreach program, sponsored by the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority, for women who need extra support during their pregnancy. It provides nutrition and prenatal lifestyle counseling to promote healthy pregnancies, reduce the incidence of low birth-weight babies, encourage positive health practices within new families, and connect new mothers/families with existing health services in their wider community.

The main components of the HBP program include drop-in support groups with other mothers, and one-to-one counselling with HBP staff or peer aides (in-person or by telephone).

Program services are available by referral for pregnant women who:

- are 25 years and older;
- are residents of Vancouver or Richmond; and
- meet eligibility requirements for high-risk or vulnerable populations (low income; new immigrants; socially isolated; mental health concerns; relationship concerns; addiction concerns, etc.)

The HBP staff includes dietitians, public health nurses and peer support workers who are fluent in 13 different languages. The program provides pregnant women with:

- nutrition counseling to maintain a healthy weight, and prenatal vitamins where necessary
- physical activity counseling to maintain a healthy weight and for stress management
- lifestyle education on tobacco, drugs or alcohol
- dental health education
- breastfeeding and labour information
- drop-in support groups with other mothers
- referrals to community resources for additional social benefits or health services

The Vancouver Coastal Health Authority (VCHA) is sponsoring a request for proposals to evaluate and provide evidence of the impact of the Healthiest Babies Possible Program. You have been asked to develop a five-page proposal to respond to the VCHA call. The proposal must include the following:

1. One research question to evaluate the impact of Healthiest Babies Possible Program. You may choose to evaluate a single health outcome or a cluster of outcomes, among mothers or babies.
2. A study design to answer the evaluation question that you proposed. Any research design is welcome:
 - Quantitative (e.g. cross sectional, cohort, case-control, ecological, time-series, RCT, intervention/evaluation study etc.);
 - Qualitative (e.g. ethnographic, case study, grounded theory, action research, etc.), or
 - Mixed-methods (e.g. exploratory, explanatory, sequential, convergent, etc.).Note: A strong rationale must be provided for the choice of study design. If conducting qualitative research, you should also describe the paradigm that underpins your approach.
3. Details about the methods of conducting your evaluation. This may include, but is not limited to, information about the study sample, data sources or methods of data collection, and analysis plan.
4. Consideration of the potential limitations of your study design and methods, and how the proposed approach addresses potential threats to validity.

VCHA does **not** require background materials, a rationale for conducting the study, details on the research team, knowledge translation activities, budget, or timeline. The proposal is limited to 5 pages, double-spaced using 2.54 cm margins and 12 point Times New Roman font.