

Research Tool: Computer Applications

Competence in computer applications may be demonstrated either
(a) through an examination featuring data manipulations with SPSS, or
(b) through an individual project arranged with the examiner.

SPSS-based examination

This is a three-hour examination which you may take in the CGU computer lab. This is an open-book examination, and you may use your books, notes, and other materials (but no people!). You will be given an examination along with data files. Among the tasks, you will be asked to manipulate data (access files, combine files, etc.), create an SPSS command file (provide labels, identify missing values, etc.), screen data for errors, analyze data to answer questions, and select and edit output in Word. You also will be asked to use Excel statistical functions.

You may access a practice examination (CAP3EXAM.doc) on the CGU web file server at <http://wfs.cgu.edu/bergerd/Practice/CAP3EXAM.doc>. (If you are reading this on a computer, you can access the exam by holding 'Ctrl' and left-clicking on the link.) The practice exam allows you to access files needed for the exam, and it includes answers. It would be prudent to take this practice examination before you take the research tool examination.

You should alert the Psychology office several days before you plan to take the examination, to make arrangements for picking up the examination and returning it three hours later.

Individual computer applications project

Because of rapidly evolving computer technologies and applications, students often find new applications that would be useful for their research. It is possible to arrange to complete an individualized project to satisfy the research tool requirement.

The project should be substantial, reflecting considerable effort and learning. A rule of thumb is that the time invested should be comparable to time invested in a 4-unit course. An ideal project will be useful for your own research and be helpful for someone else as well.

The first step toward meeting the requirements for this tool is to develop a brief prospectus for your project, and then meet with the examiner to work out details for the project. There should be a written product as well as a computer program. The examiner may ask you to write up a User's Guide for your program, provide a listing of code, and demonstrate its application.

Examiner: Dale Berger