MS in HIIM Comprehensive Exam – Part 2

Comprehensive Examination Construction

The Master of Science in Health Informatics and Information management requires all students pass a comprehensive examination to graduate. In the fall of 2015, I was tasked with creating the second of the two-part exam, integrating two of my courses: COHE 6430 Database Systems in Health Care and COHE 6470 Health Information Privacy and Security.

My intent with the design was to integrate both courses into a single test, rather than having separate components. Students would be expected to perform various database activities, then report on the security of the results given various questions/scenarios. This allowed for a seamless transition from one subject to another without increasing memory load or fatigue.

Part two is given in two subparts to avoid error propagation. That is, in the first subpart, students must generate a consensus schema from two sources, create the new tables, and load the data. If mistakes are made here, then any subsequent question would be answered incorrectly (thus, propagating the error). To avoid this, once the aforementioned questions are answered, the exam is submitted to Blackboard, upon which time its solutions are released along with the second subpart (advanced queries). As a result, all students begin subpart two with the correct database foundation, eliminating error propagation.

The questions were chosen based on my experience in the field and conversations with working professionals. Also, students can take the exam using either PostgreSQL (the database management system deployed in class, but difficult to reconfigure if removed post-COHE 6430) and Microsoft Access (for ease, but not something expressly covered in COHE 6430).

Comprehensive Examination Grading

Since the exam was first given in the spring of 2016, I have graded part two. The following are the number of examinations given/graded per semester since spring 2016.

Semester	Count
Summer 2018	6
Spring 2018	16
Fall 2017	2
Summer 2017	1
Spring 2017	2
Fall 2016	6
Summer 2016	0
Spring 2016	1

What You Will Find in This Section

In this section, you will find the examinations description and study notes as provided to the students, basic database examination options and instructions, the exam itself, and a sample of my feedback to the students.