

Ph.D. QUALIFYING EXAM INSTRUCTIONS

The Qualifying Exam (including oral defense) should be completed no later than the fourth semester. THIS IS A BRIEF OVERVIEW. FOR COMPLETE INSTRUCTIONS, PLEASE CONSULT YOUR DEPARTMENT GUIDELINES FOR ADVANCED DEGREES.

1. Write your Qualifying Exam description of two projects and prepare your talk (with PowerPoint, slides, overheads, etc.) The Qualifying Exam proposals may not exceed ten (10) pages (excluding figures and references) for each project (20 pages total), or your examining committee can set a lower limit. You may ask your advisors for suggestions on format.
2. Coordinate a time (2-3 hours) with your Qualifying Exam committee to conduct your oral defense, avoiding the first and last week of classes. Contact the academic program coordinator to reserve a room.
3. Two or three (2-3) weeks prior to your Qualifying Exam oral defense, contact the Director of Graduate Studies to have the “external” Ph.D. Qualifying Exam Committee member assigned to your exam committee. Note that this person is not required for, and usually does not serve on, the thesis committee once you have completed your Qualifying Exam.
4. The Qualifying Exam Brief should be completed with a summary of the proposals and serves as a cover sheet. You can download this form from the department website. (Go to: *Academics>Graduate Thesis Programs>Forms tab> PhD Qualifying Exam Brief and Signature Form*)
5. Your proposals and Qualifying Exam Brief must be submitted to your thesis committee at least seven (7) days prior to your defense and unanimously approved before the Qualifying Exam defense can be conducted. Signatures from all committee members on the Brief demonstrates approval by the committee to proceed to the defense.
6. Via email, send the Academic Program Coordinator the signed Qualifying Exam Brief and the Qualifying Exam proposals at least seven (7) days in advance of your Qualifying Exam. She/he will then email the faculty your Qualifying Exam date and signed Brief. The proposals will be available in his or her office for faculty review.
7. Finally, you will need the Qualifying Exam Result form found on the department website under point 4 above. After you pass your exam, get all required signatures and then give the original signed form to the Academic Program Coordinator for your file.

If you do not defend your proposals before the end of the fourth semester, you must contact the Director of Graduate Studies and get written approval by your thesis advisor for a petition for an extension. Once your advisor has approved on your petition, you must submit the petition to the Director of Graduate Studies requesting an extension. **DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE TO MAKE THE ABOVE ARRANGEMENTS!**