

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 Description 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. Please check with the Graduate Advisor to confirm your proposal topics are sufficiently different.
2. Two or three (2-3) weeks prior to your Qualifying Exam, contact the Graduate Advisor to have the “external” Ph.D. Qualifying Exam Committee member assigned to your qualifying exam. Note that this person is not required, and usually does not serve, on the Thesis Committee once you have completed your Qualifying Exam.
3. Your proposals 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.
4. The Qualifying Exam Brief form (which can be downloaded from the Department Webpage) serves as a cover page for the proposals and should contain a summary of the proposal(s) as well as the signature of the Thesis Committee, the “external” Ph.D. Exam Committee Member and the Graduate Advisor. (Note: You can download this form from the Department Webpage. (Go to: *Graduate*, then *PhD Forms*, and finally, *PhD Thesis Proposal Brief and Signature Form*.)
5. Schedule a time (2-3 hours) when your Committee can meet to conduct your oral defense, avoiding the first and last week of classes.
6. Reserve a room. (Also, reserve a laptop and projector, if required.)
7. Notify the Department Coordinator (Sandra) and the Graduate Advisor of the time of your Qualifying Exam at least one (1) week prior to the event. (Invite the Chair and Graduate Advisor to attend or send a representative to your Qualifying Exam.)
8. All members of the faculty must receive a signed Qualifying Exam Brief at least seven (7) days prior to your oral exam. Please place a copy in each faculty member’s mailbox.
9. Mary Ann, the Graduate Program Coordinator, must also receive a copy of the signed Qualifying Exam Brief AS WELL AS THE PROPOSAL at least seven (7) days in advance of your Qualifying Exam. She will then notify the faculty that the proposal is available in her office for review.
10. Finally, you will need the Qualifying Exam Signature Form found on the Departmental web site under point 4 above. After you pass your exam, get all required signatures and then give the original signed form to Mary Ann for your file.

If you do not defend your proposals before the end of the fourth semester, you must contact the Graduate Advisor and get written approval by your Thesis Committee for a petition for an extension. Once your Committee has approved on your petition, you must submit the petition to the Graduate Committee requesting an extension. **DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE TO MAKE THE ABOVE ARRANGEMENTS! THIS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT PIECE OF ADVICE.**