PhD Candidacy Examination Timeline

The candidacy examination is comprised of a written thesis proposal, an oral presentation of the PhD research plan and open questioning of the student by the candidacy committee to ascertain the student’s readiness to carry out the proposed research. Guidelines for the format and content of the written proposal will be provided to the student by his/her supervisor(s) or supervisory committee.

Normally the process from the Graduate Program Director’s request for a candidacy examination to the student’s oral examination requires a minimum of 5 weeks. At least 4 full weeks prior to the proposed date for the candidacy examination, the external examiner must be approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies and the PhD student must submit his/her thesis proposal to the program office. This ensures adequate time for candidacy committee members to receive the documentation, thoroughly review the thesis proposal and prepare their questions and written reports.

No less that five weeks prior to oral exam:

1. GPD and supervisor set tentative date for candidacy exam
2. GPD sends Appointment of PhD Candidacy Committee Form to Dean of Graduate Studies for approval.

At end of exam, the chair of the PhD Candidacy Committee oversees the preparation of a written report using the PhD Candidacy Examination – Summary of Committee Decision form and ensures that it is signed by all committee members.

WEEK 1 - Oral Exam - Oral presentation of student’s research proposal and open questioning by committee members. Committee members provide student with copies of their reports at the time of the exam.

WEEK 2

Candidacy committee members have 4 weeks in which to review the student’s thesis proposal and prepare a detailed written report which addresses the strengths and weaknesses of the student’s written work, makes recommendations for improvement and suggests resources which may support the student’s work. Members prepare questions to determine the student’s knowledge of the thesis topic and readiness to conduct the proposed research.

WEEK 3

Four weeks to oral exam – student submits written thesis proposal to program office. Student’s materials are then distributed to members of PhD Candidacy Committee by GPD.

WEEK 4

WEEK 5

WEEK 6