

# Qualifying Exam Checklist

This checklist is designed to assist you in preparing for your Ph.D. Qualifying Examination which consists of written and oral segments.

- If you entered the Graduate program with an M.A., you should START PREPARING for the qualifying exam at the BEGINNING of your second year.
- If you entered the Graduate program with a B.A., you should START PREPARING for the qualifying exam at the END of the second year.

**1) Exam Committee Selection** – Determine your faculty advisory committee chairperson and work closely with him/her in selecting your other committee members. By Academic Senate Regulation and Graduate Policy, the Candidacy Committee is comprised of five voting members of the University of California Academic Senate -- not necessarily of the Irvine Division -- a majority of whom, but not all, are affiliated with the program. The committee consists of four (4) members, at least three (3) of whom will be from our department or from the roster of affiliated faculty, plus a fifth member (the external member who monitors the oral exam) who is selected from outside the department and must be a UC Irvine Academic Senate faculty member.

## Committee Membership:

**The Chair:** The Chair of the Candidacy Committee must hold either a primary or joint appointment in the student's department (or academic unit) and must be a voting member of the UC Academic Senate. No exceptions to these requirements will be considered.

**General Membership:** At least two members in addition to the Chair must hold either a primary or joint appointment in the student's department or academic unit. No exceptions to the requirement that a majority of voting members hold appointments in the student's department or academic unit will be considered. Non-voting Senate members or faculty holding professorial titles at other universities will be considered on an exception-only basis.

**The Outside Member:** One member of the Candidacy Committee, designated the "outside member", must be from the Irvine Division and may not hold either a primary or joint appointment in the student's department or academic unit. ***In addition, please note that the "outside member" may not be affiliated with the department.*** The outside member represents the faculty at large. The role of the "outside member" is to serve as an unbiased and independent judge of both the quality and fairness of the exam. It is therefore desirable that this individual be familiar with the student's research field. No exceptions to these requirements will be considered.

**2) Written Exams** – The Qualifying Examination tests you on four topics or fields to be selected in consultation with your faculty advisory committee no less than two quarters before the examinations are to be taken. One of the topics should be related directly to your projected area of specialization in dissertation research. Questions for written response will be drawn up by the faculty advisory committee (Candidacy Committee) and will relate to the chosen topics, reading lists, and bibliographies.

**3) Examination Reading Lists** – You should submit four preliminary examination topics and reading lists for your committee's approval to the exam committee Chair no less than one quarter before the examination is to be taken. Your submission should include (1) a one-paragraph heading for each field that articulates the subject, issue, or problem to be addressed, as well as its scope; and (2) a reading list for each field that adequately represents the topic. A typical list in each field, prepared in the form of a bibliography, comprises 20-30 major (i.e. book-length) or otherwise pertinent texts, including both primary and secondary texts where appropriate. After the Reading List has been approved, it is considered final. The final version of the Reading List must be submitted to the Graduate Coordinator who will date the final version and place a copy in the student's file.

**4) Scheduling Your Exams** – You need to work closely with your committee chair to

schedule your exams in accordance with the convenience and availability of your committee members. The Ph.D. Qualifying Exam consists of written and oral segments. Questions for written response will be drawn up by the faculty committee and will relate to the chosen topics, reading lists, and bibliographies. If the qualifying exam is taken during the summer months, the written segment should be completed by August 31st. If taken during the Fall, Winter, or Spring quarter, it must be completed by the end of the ninth week.

**5) Submission of Final Headnotes/Lists** – You must submit final headnotes and complete booklists to each member of your exam committee, the committee chair, and the Graduate Coordinator one month prior to examination date.

**6) Written Examination** – The written exam segment will be taken over a four day period. Exams must be taken on consecutive normal business days, with a one day break or weekend (Saturday and Sunday) in between exams permitted. Each written exam will be four hours in length, with one additional hour permitted for editing. No electronic media of any kind will be allowed in the testing room. You will be required to leave backpacks, purses, etc. in the Graduate Coordinator's office. Use of the Internet is not allowed during the Qualifying Exams. Open or closed book policy and the use of notes will be determined in close consultation with the examiner. Exams are in-class and students will use the department's computer to complete the written exams. Personal computer use will not be permitted. If you fail any field or topic, you may retake that portion of the test no sooner than one month and no longer than one quarter after the original test. If you fail on the second try, you will be dropped from the Graduate Program.

**7) Oral Examination** - It is your responsibility to schedule the oral exam one month prior to the date it will be held in order to assure faculty availability. The oral exam usually takes place about one week after the written exam, contingent on your successful performance in the latter. The oral exam, which often begins with a brief presentation on a subject selected by the student in consultation with the committee between the written and oral exams, will focus on particular aspects of the written examination and then extend to broader questions. If you fail the oral examination, you may retake the oral portion no more than one quarter after the original exam. If you fail on the second attempt, you will be dropped from the Graduate program.

**8) Advancement** - Upon passing the written and oral examinations, a student advances to candidacy in the quarter in which the exams were completed as long as the PhD Form I is submitted and approved by Graduate Division by the advancement deadline for that quarter. Advancement deadlines are posted on the Graduate Division website. Students must also pay the \$90.00 advancement to candidacy fee\* before submitting the PhD Form I.

\*This fee is subject to change. Students should check the Registrar Office's website for current fee information.

**9) Note 1** – Extraordinary circumstances excepted, you must have completed the following requirements before taking the Qualifying Exam:

- a. Complete your program of study consisting of 15 graduate courses.
- b. Prepare one paper of publishable quality pending approval of the Faculty Advisor.
- c. Complete all language requirements
- d. Prepare five critical reviews on current scholarly materials (books or significant articles) to be decided upon in consultation with your Faculty Advisor.