

## **Candidacy Examination Guidelines**

Ph.D. students write candidacy examinations in their area of specialization. Candidacy Examinations will be conducted on completion of the students coursework, and administered by the IGOV Program Manager with the direction of the Committee Supervisor. The format will consist of a written examinations\ followed by an oral examination. In the oral examination, the candidate will be examined in both research methodology and his/her area of specialization. Doctoral students are required to successfully complete all of the courses detailed in the Special Arrangement Program form, before progressing to the candidacy examination. Students are required to complete both the written and oral components of the candidacy examinations within one year of completing their coursework.

### **Part One - Written Exam**

The exam is intended to gauge the student's grasp of the main issues and key concepts in relevant fields of study. Exams will be graded by IGOV faculty members selected by the Director, and the papers are evaluated on a Pass/Fail basis. In the event of a failure students are allowed to repeat the exam once, within four weeks of their first exam.

The examination will consist of three 10-page papers written on questions chosen from among five questions provided by the student's supervisory committee. Students may complete the examination in either format allowed by the Program: a) two six-hour sessions administered on-site, b) a take-home exam to be completed and returned within two days.

### **Part Two - Oral Exam**

The oral candidacy examination is intended to confirm the student knows the literature, has solid background knowledge and sufficient breadth and understanding of the key issues in the field, and fundamentally understands the research methodology appropriate to the proposed area of study. The oral examination normally takes place within two months of completing the written examination. The scheduling of the examination should be arranged at least four weeks prior to the proposed date.

The student should prepare a written research proposal to provide as advance material to the examining committee at least two weeks prior to the examination date. The proposal should not exceed 10 double spaced text pages plus supplemental figures and tables. The document should be read and approved by the supervisor prior to submission to the other committee members, and should typically consist of:

- ◆ a brief introduction with an overview of the area of knowledge, the specific research problem and the motivation for the proposed research;
- ◆ a review of prior work in the field and an explanation of how the proposed research will contribute to the field;
- ◆ a description of the proposed research methodology;
- ◆ a timetable with major milestones;
- ◆ a relevant bibliography.

*It should be emphasized that at this stage of the doctoral program the student is not expected to have produced any new findings or results. However, clear objectives, thoughts on usefulness and the research plan should be presented.*

This exam committee will consist of the supervisory committee and an indigenous community representative, and will be chaired by a faculty member (who may be the supervisor or any other member of the examining committee) appointed by the Supervisor. In the event that the examining

committee chair is not a member of the examining committee, the chair will be non-voting. The indigenous community member may attend the exam in person as a voting member or participate *in absentia* as a non-voting member by providing the Program with a letter that includes an evaluation of the proposal that will be considered by the committee in its deliberation.

The examination will be open to members of the University and to representatives of Indigenous communities.

### Conduct of the Examination

The oral candidacy examination is a formal examination consisting normally of a brief (15-20 minute) presentation of the research proposal by the student, followed by questions and then a deliberation of the examination committee. The duration of the examination should not normally exceed two hours. Each member of the examination committee, starting with the external member, will be given an opportunity to question the candidate in two rounds of questions.

Immediately after the completion of the oral candidacy examination, the candidate is asked to leave the room. Assessment is performed in two steps. First, before discussion, each examiner identifies her/his provisional recommendation (pass/fail) to provide a framework for a full discussion. Following this, a full discussion takes place. Upon completion of the deliberations, a formal vote shall be taken. The result can be:

- a) Pass
- b) Fail, but allowed to re-take examination once
- c) Fail, and requested to withdraw from Ph.D. program

The chair of the examination committee notifies the candidate of the decision of the committee immediately upon the end of the deliberation. A memo is prepared by the Chair and signed by the Program Director informing the Dean of Graduate Studies that the exam has been completed successfully.

In case of a fail, a memo should be forwarded to the Department Director, and, within seven days, each examiner must submit a written assessment of the overall performance of the candidate to the Department Director with a copy to the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies.