

Doctoral Candidacy Examination Process Studies in Policy and Practice by Special Arrangement and Interdisciplinary Studies Students with Studies in Policy and Practice as the Home Unit

This policy document is written in the spirit of producing a set of general principles that govern the Candidacy Examination process in Studies in Policy and Practice (SPP) and guidelines that inform the practice of the Doctoral Candidacy Examination Process.

Principles

Inequities that reflect privilege and marginalization in relation to (in no particular order) class, wealth, racialized identity, sexual orientation, gender, ability, age and family status remain deeply entrenched in contemporary society including the University and result in individual and collective suffering. In this context, finding effective strategies for reducing poverty, redistributing wealth, alleviating suffering, enhancing quality of life, living sustainably, protecting non-human life, reversing environmental damage, democratizing political processes, preserving cultures, eliminating violence and contributing to more equitable processes and outcomes is a pressing task. SPP sees the examination process as a space for the exploration of the social, political, economic, and cultural issues that are of interest to doctoral students and a critical site for fostering social justice within the University. To this end:

- SPP acknowledges, appreciates, and embraces the diversity of students' identities, life circumstances, and learning styles.
- SPP values multiple theoretical orientations.
- SPP takes into account variation in life circumstances when setting the pace for and scheduling of exams.
- SPP honours multiple methodologies, data collection methods, and analytical methods.
- SPP seeks to reproduce socially just acts and processes deliberately.

Purpose

Doctoral candidacy exams are a requirement of the Faculty of Graduate Studies. The examination provides the student with the opportunity to demonstrate knowledge of her or his field of study, to place the proposed dissertation topic in her or his field of study, and to display command of her or his ability to undertake independent research. Assessment is based on the student's ability to conceptualize and synthesize material, arguments, and literature in a given field of study; to write and present arguments developed out of reflections and engagement with relevant literatures; and to analyze critically the relevant literatures that provide a foundation for dissertation research.

Place of the Examination Process in the Student's Doctoral Program

The candidacy exams are to be taken after completion of the formal coursework associated with the Student's doctoral program.

Timeline

The candidacy examination process will take approximately 6 months to complete.

Structure

Candidacy exams comprise a written and oral component. Paper topics are set through dialogue. The Student usually writes two papers, one focused on framing a field of study theoretically and/or empirically and one focused on selected methodologies for the chosen topic of research.

Process

The details for the writing of the papers are to be worked out prior to the beginning of the exam.

Actors and Roles

Student: The student through the exam is to demonstrate a comprehensive knowledge of a field of study and readiness to undertake dissertation research, as outlined above.

Supervisory Committee: Supervisory Committee members act as the examination committee and assess the both the written and oral parts of the exam.

Adopted September 15, 2011.