

DEPARTMENT OF GENETICS AND GENOME SCIENCES

PhD Program

Guidelines and Format for the Qualifying Exam Grant Proposal

The Qualifying Exam will consist of preparing and defending a 2 to 3 year Exploratory/Developmental Research Grant Application on the thesis topic and specific aims.

The proposal consists of:

- A title page that includes: Student's name • Thesis Advisor's name and contact information • QE date • Grant proposal title.
- Arial font size 11, single line spacing and 0.5" margins must be used for the remainder of the proposal.
- The grant proposal should be divided as follows:
- Specific aims (1 page) •
- Research Plan (12 pages maximum) The Research Plan has the following sub sections: Significance (~ 1 page or less) • Innovation (1 paragraph) • Approach (up to 9 pages). The Approach section itself has the following subsections: Background/Preliminary Studies (1-2 pages) • Experimental Design and Methods (6-7 pages). The Research Plan page limit includes all tables, graphs, figures, diagrams, and charts.
- Literature cited (1-3 pages).
- **NOTE:** Students will write a 6 page proposal in GENE 511. For the written QE proposal however, students may expand their GENE 511 proposal using the above guidelines to better convey the thesis research ideas, particularly after more preliminary data are generated after the completion of GENE 511.

Role of Thesis Advisor: Thesis Advisor should discuss the topic and specific aims with the student, read the written proposal and give comments. However, the proposal must be the student's original work and not a modified copy of the Advisor's grants. **Thesis advisor are not present at the proposal defense.**

The entire grant proposal must be submitted to the QE committee at least two weeks prior to the scheduled oral defense. **If the QE Committee determines that the student has plagiarized any portion of the written proposal** (plagiarism software may be used to confirm that the final proposal is original work), the QE Committee Chair will notify the student and cancel the oral defense. In this case, the Exam will be considered a failed Exam.

If after reviewing the submitted grant proposal prior to the scheduled Exam, the QE Committee feels the written proposal is so poorly written that it is not defensible, the QE Committee Chair will notify the student that the proposal must be rewritten and cancel the oral defense,

In either of the above situations, the QE Committee Chair will submit a written report outlining the QE Committee's concerns and reasoning for canceling the scheduled Exam. The QE Committee Chair must also contact the Program Directors (Helen Miranda and Anne Matthews) to petition for an extension to reschedule the QE.

Core Curriculum Knowledge: It is important to note that the student is responsible for all material in their Core Curriculum in addition to being responsible for information pertaining to their grant proposal. General questions will be asked to allow the Exam Committee to assess the caliber of the student, identify weaknesses in their overall knowledge.

Guidelines and Format for the Proposal Defense

The student will prepare a presentation of the thesis Grant Proposal that includes background and significance, preliminary data, and specific aims. A typical presentation will include 30-35 slides, 5-10 slides on background and significance, 1 slide on central hypothesis, up to 5 slides on preliminary data, and 15-20 slides on research plan. The presentation will be interrupted frequently with questions. The questions will include those that test the student's background knowledge and those that test the student's critical thinking ability.

Note: Preparing food and drinks at committee meetings is not necessary, and in fact, is discouraged.

DEPARTMENT OF GENETICS AND GENOME SCIENCES
PhD Program

QUALIFYING EXAM REPORT

BRING THIS FORM WITH YOU TO THE DEFENSE!!! The proposal defense should take place by June 30 of the student's second year (December 31 of second year for an MSTP student). Members should sign the report before leaving the meeting. During the meeting, when the student leaves the room for committee discussion, the Thesis Committee Chair should solicit answers for this form and write in the answers and narrative comments reflecting the committee's assessment. When the student returns to the room, the chair should go over this report with the student. The student is responsible for providing each committee member as well as the graduate program director (Helen Miranda) with an electronic copy and providing Sanjana Pandit with the signed form as soon as possible following the Research Qualifying Exam. If the student receives conditional pass, he/she shall submit the report without page 3 immediately after the defense. They shall submit page 3 of the report with committee chair's comment after they complete the requirement recommended by the committee.

Student's Name:	Date of Committee Meeting:
-----------------	----------------------------

Rate on a scale of 1 (outstanding) to 5 (poor)	Quality of Written Proposal	Feasibility of Project	Knowledge	Presentation
Chair signature _____ Name (printed):				
Member signature _____ Name (printed):				
Member signature _____ Name (printed):				
Member signature _____ Name (printed):				

Action Taken (please mark corresponding box and comment as appropriate):

☐ PASS:

☐ CONDITIONAL PASS: Proposal to be revised and returned to Committee Members

Comments:

Note date of completion:

☐ FAIL:

Comments:

Chair's Report

- Please summarize the strengths, weaknesses, and feasibility of the proposal:
- Please comment on the student's exam performance:
- Please comment on the student's core knowledge:

Student's Update

- I've completed the online "Planned Program of Study" (School of Graduate Studies website) ☐ YES ☐ NO

Signature: _____ Date: _____
Student

Signature: _____ Date: _____
Advisor

- Advancement to Candidacy form has been submitted to Graduate Studies (this form can be downloaded from the website of School of Graduate Studies):

Signature: _____ Date: _____
Student