
How to prepare for your candidacy examination

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The purpose

Students must demonstrate to the satisfaction of the examining committee that they possess:

- ✓ an adequate knowledge of the discipline and of the subject matter relevant to the thesis;
- ✓ the ability to pursue and complete original research at an advanced level; and
- ✓ the ability to meet any other requirements found in the department's published policy on candidacy examinations.

Possible outcomes

- Adjudged (majority; extraordinary circumstances, code of conduct violations)
- Pass (all/all but one)
- Conditional pass (majority)
- Fail and repeat the candidacy (majority; exam performance inadequate but performance/work to date indicate potential to perform at the doctoral level)
- If the student fails the second candidacy, fail with a recommendation to terminate the doctoral program (all/all but one; performance and work completed to date both inadequate) or for a change of category to a master's program (all/all but one; performance inadequate but potential indicated for masters program).

What are examiners looking for?

- Internal consistency in hypotheses/objectives, methods, work to date
- Critical evaluation of the literature and one's own work
- Reasonable/feasible scope, realistic timelines
- The ability to offer reasoned speculation when one doesn't know the answer

Purpose:

- ✓ an adequate knowledge of the discipline and of the subject matter relevant to the thesis
- ✓ the ability to pursue and complete original research at an advanced level

How can students prepare?

- Preparation starts as soon as your research topic has been chosen
- Stay on top of the literature
- Critically evaluate your work at regular intervals, be aware of its strengths and weaknesses
- Discuss with your supervisor/supervisory committee regularly
- Practice presentation multiple times, have a mock candidacy
- Be aware of departmental requirements and expectations/culture
- Think like an examiner