

Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering

PhD Candidacy Oral Examination Checklist

Dear Student,

To prepare for your oral exam, please read the following:

Ph.D. Candidacy Examination:

The candidacy examination is normally taken after all course work is completed and thesis work has begun. This examination focuses on the general background preparation of the student in the area of the ongoing and proposed research and should be taken before the end of the second year of registration in the Ph.D. program (i.e. 18 to 24 months after the start of the Ph.D. program).

Four weeks prior to the examination, the supervisor of the student should contact the Graduate Student Advisor with details of the oral exam (the time between Christmas and New Year's does not count). A *Notice and Approval of Oral Examination Committee* must be approved by the Department and GPS.

Two weeks prior to the examination, all examiners must receive a copy of the *candidacy examination thesis status report*. This document will typically consist of 20-30 pages, but no more than 30 pages, and contain a literature survey and a description of the research project. It should include work conducted to date, future work and a statement outlining the original contribution and impact expected, and conclude with a time-line for completion of the thesis.

You will need to write a *Summary of Student's Record*. This should include courses completed, grades, awards, publications, conferences, etc (anything pertaining to your PhD program). You will need to send an electronic copy to Selina Ertman ASAP, but no later than 1 week before the exam. The information that you provide will be made available to the members of the examining committee during the exam. **Note:** a curriculum vitae is not a substitute for this form.

As part of the PhD Candidacy exam, the student will give a 20-25 minute public seminar on the thesis research to the Department, and after the seminar, the PhD Candidacy Examining Committee will meet with the student to conduct the candidacy exam.

To help us advertise your seminar, please send an e-mail a few days in advance containing the information detailed below to the Graduate Student Advisor, Selina Ertman at ertman@ualberta.ca

- Subject: Seminar.
- Student name: Your name.
- Purpose of the seminar: PhD Candidacy Examination.
- Date and time of the seminar (same as the exam)
- Remote Invite
- Area of interest (communications, software, control, power, photonics, plasmas, etc.)
- Your supervisor(s) name.
- Title of your seminar.
- Abstract. Include abstract in the text of your e-mail message and not as an attachment.

Prepare a brief biography (100 words maximum) that your supervisor will use to introduce you to the audience.

You or your supervisor should send a reminder e-mail regarding your exam to your exam committee members the day before the exam.

You should bring a hard copy of your report to the exam with you.

During the exam, 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, and the ability to pursue and complete original research at an advanced level*. During the examination only minor attention should be given to the candidacy examination thesis status report and the seminar per se. The examination should determine whether the student is adequately prepared to be awarded the status of Ph.D. Candidate.

At the candidacy oral, after proper introductions, the chair of the examination reviews the procedures of the exam. Then the candidate is asked to briefly leave the room while his/her academic file and background are reviewed. Then the student is invited back to the room for the oral exam. There are normally two rounds of questions from the examiners. In each round, questioning is begun by the out-of-department examiner (internal/external) and proceeds to the supervisor. After questioning has concluded the student can make a final statement if he or she so desires and then is asked to leave the room again for the examination committee to reach its final verdict. The verdict shall be one of the following:

- Pass.
- Conditional pass. The candidate is asked to meet some extra conditions to achieve a pass (for example, to write a report on a background area in which they were deemed to be deficient in knowledge). In this case, the committee should provide in writing the mechanism as well as the time frame for the student to meet the conditions.
- Fail. Possible recommendation: (i) Repeat the Candidacy, (ii) Change of Category to a Master's Program, (iii) Termination of the Doctoral Program.