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## 4.6 Candidacy Examination

### 4.6.1 Purpose

The purpose of the Candidacy Examination is to evaluate the student's capability to synthesize and integrate material as applied to the research focus area. It is expected that the student demonstrates a certain breadth of knowledge and is able to apply this knowledge to a problem.

### 4.6.2 Eligibility

The student must have

- filed a formal Program of Study and
- completed the courses recommended by the focus area

before registering for the exam. Usually, the student will register for the Candidacy Examination before the end of the second year of study.

### 4.6.3 Required Action

The candidate must complete and submit a *Request for Candidacy Examination Form* (see Appendix B, P. B-10) to the Program Coordinator no later than 30 days before the scheduled examination. The dissertation advisor and Program Director must sign this form.

### 4.6.4 Examination Format

The exam contains a written part followed by an oral part, usually taken within a three-week period of each other. Each focus area has its own specific format on how to administer the two parts of the Candidacy Examination and who is responsible for these parts. The details for each focus area are outlined in subsection 4.6.7.

### 4.6.5 Examination Outcome

The following outcomes are possible:

- pass
- repeat exam or part thereof after strengthening specific areas of weakness
- fail

The deliberations and vote concerning the outcome of the exam take place immediately following the oral exam. The examination outcome requires a 2/3rd majority of all members of the

examination committee for pass and fail. Any other vote results in a repeat of the exam or part thereof.

When the Candidacy Examination is completed, a *Record of Candidacy Examination Form* (see Appendix B, p. B-14) is signed by all members of the examination committee and forwarded to the Program Coordinator.

#### **4.6.6 Repeat of Candidacy Examination**

If the outcome of the first Candidacy Examination was “repeat exam or part thereof after strengthening specific areas of weakness,” the student may submit another request for a Candidacy Examination. This request is to be submitted no earlier than three months and usually no later than six months after completion of the first attempt. Only one repeat of the Candidacy Examination is permitted.

#### **4.6.7 Specific Focus Area Guidelines**

##### **4.6.7.6 Medical and Biological Systems**

The Candidacy Examination evaluates the student’s capability to synthesize and integrate material as applied to a research area. As such, it is expected that the student will have completed the majority of his or her coursework. The examination consists of both written and oral components.

###### **4.6.7.6.1 Examination Committee**

The Candidacy Examining Committee is comprised of members of the student’s Dissertation Committee.

###### **4.6.7.6.2 Examination Deadlines**

The student submits a request for the Candidacy Examination to the Focus Area Chair and the student’s advisor for submittal to the Program Coordinator. This should be done at least six weeks prior to the expected oral examination date. Along with the request, the student will submit a five-page, double-spaced description of a proposed area of research.

Within one week after the request, the student’s description of the proposed area of research will be distributed to the examining committee by the student’s advisor.

###### **4.6.7.6.4 Examination Content**

The content of the examination is drawn from the student’s course work with consideration of the planned area of specialization.

###### **4.6.7.4.5 Written Exam**

The Committee decides which questions are to be answered in a sitting exam and which are to

be answered in a take-home exam, what supporting materials are allowed for a sitting exam, and how much time is allowed to create the answers to the questions. The student receives the questions and prepares written responses to each question. The advisor will collect all written answers.

The responses for all questions are distributed to the Candidacy Examination Committee the day following their receipt. Evaluation of these answers represents the written component of the Candidacy Examination.

#### **4.6.7.5.6 Oral Exam**

The oral exam takes place approximately one week after the written exam. The duration of the oral exam is determined by the examination committee.

Based on a composite evaluation of the student's written and oral components of the examination, the Candidacy Examination Committee determines the student's capability to continue his or her doctoral studies. At the conclusion of the oral component, the committee will decide on one of three outcomes: pass, repeat exam or part thereof after strengthening specific areas of weakness, or fail.