

QUALIFYING EXAMINATION

As early as possible and in no case later than the final semester of the minimum duration requirement (the 5th semester for a full-time student), the student is required to pass an examination to assess their knowledge of the subject area and related fields. The examination ordinarily will be in several parts (written and/or oral) and should be completed within a two-week period if possible.

The Qualifying Examination is an examination by the academic unit in which the student is enrolled (as distinct from an examination by the Advisory Committee). Upon completing it satisfactorily, the student is deemed to have met the departmental standards and becomes a candidate for the PhD degree. The examining committee, appointed by the Chair or Director of the academic unit concerned, consists of five members:

- The Chair/Director of the academic unit (or designate) or the Chair of the Graduate Program Committee, who acts as Chair of the examination committee *except* when this person is also a member of the advisory committee. In that event, the Chair will designate another member of the regular graduate faculty of the unit to chair the examination;
- Two members, normally of the regular or associated graduate faculty who are not members of the Advisory Committee;
- Two members of the Advisory Committee;
- Normally, at least one of the Qualifying Examination committee members must be from outside the department/discipline in which the student is registered. That person may be a member of the Advisory Committee.

Note

The Chair serves to administer the examination according to the approved format of the program. The Chair does not serve as an additional examiner. In unforeseen circumstances where a committee member is unable to attend, the Chair will attempt to receive questions to ask on behalf of the absent member, to be answered by the student to the satisfaction of the examiners.

As a Qualifying Examination, consideration is to be given not only:

1. to the student's knowledge of the subject matter and ability to integrate the material derived from their studies, but also
2. to the student's ability and promise in research.

The Examination Committee, therefore, will receive from the Advisory Committee a written evaluation of the quality of the student's research performance to date and of the student's potential as a researcher. The Examination Committee will determine the relative importance to be given to these two major components of the Qualifying Examination.

The student is deemed to have passed the Qualifying Examination if not more than one of the examiners votes negatively. An abstention is regarded as a negative vote. The results of the Qualifying Examination will be reported to the Assistant Vice-President (Graduate Studies) through the Chair of the academic unit. The report to the Assistant VP will record the decision as unsatisfactory or satisfactory. The Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies will register the student in UNIV*7000 Qualifying Examination and record the result of the report. If it is unsatisfactory, the student may be given a second attempt (UNIV*7010 Qualifying Examination (Second Attempt)) at the examination. A student

who fails the Qualifying Examination and who is being given a second opportunity to pass the examination will be required to repeat it no later than six months after the failed attempt. Academic units may impose a shorter time limit. A second failure constitutes a recommendation to the Board of Graduate Studies that the student be required to withdraw (see Unsatisfactory Progress (calendar.uoguelph.ca/graduate-calendar/general-regulations/unsatisfactory-progress/) and Appeals of Decisions (calendar.uoguelph.ca/graduate-calendar/general-regulations/appeals-decisions/)).