

GUIDELINES AND POLICIES

For The Interdisciplinary Doctoral Program in Biological Sciences

IV. ADMISSION TO CANDIDACY FOR THE DOCTORAL DEGREE

Doctoral students must successfully pass the doctoral candidacy examination. A student's eligibility for the examination will be determined by the Program Director upon receiving a recommendation from the student's Graduate Advisory Committee. Every effort should be made to complete the examination process by the end of the fifth semester (summer sessions excluded). The examination will be administered in two parts. The first part will be an individualized written examination prepared by the student's advisory committee. The second part will be a comprehensive preliminary examination which will address the student's originality and knowledge in the area of the proposed dissertation research. Upon passing both examinations the student will be recommended for admission to candidacy for the degree, Doctor of Philosophy.

A. Examination Part 1

The qualifying examination should be taken during the second year of study, usually in the spring or summer semester. Each member of the student's graduate advisory committee will prepare one or more written questions. The questions should be appropriate to the training coursework and potential field of study of the student. Each question should be graded by its author; but the student's performance on all questions should be considered by each member of the committee. Approval of the student's performance will be by a roll call vote of the Graduate Advisory Committee with no abstention. A passing vote consists of no more than one negative vote. Unsatisfactory performance twice will result in termination of the student's Doctoral program.

B. Comprehensive Preliminary Examination

Upon successfully completing the first part of the qualifying examination, the student will compose a grant application, prepared in the format of a National Institutes of Health or National Science Foundation grant application that describes the proposed dissertation research. Within one semester of completing the part 1 of the examination, the final version of the grant application will be submitted to the student's Graduate Advisory Committee for evaluation and then presented in a public seminar. Following the seminar, the Graduate Advisory Committee and student will meet in a session at which time the student will defend the grant application and the scientific principles upon which it is based.

Any faculty member may attend and participate in the grant application defense; however, the student's Graduate Advisory Committee is responsible for the administration and evaluation of this examination. Approval of the student's performance will be by a roll call vote of the Graduate Advisory Committee with no abstention. A passing vote consists of no more than one negative vote. The student's Graduate Advisory Committee Chair will be responsible for submitting the form: "DOCTORAL CANDIDACY EXAMINATION REPORT" (see Appendix) to the Program Director.