

## **PhD Candidacy Exam**

### **REQUIREMENT FOR ALL STUDENTS TAKING THE CANDIDACY EXAM**

Prior to GAP approving the eligibility for any student to sit the candidacy exam, the student must have a sponsor who affirms that (a) they are willing to act as the student's doctoral adviser and (b) there is an identified plan for funding for that student.

### **FORMAT OF THE EXAM**

The exam will consist of a research component (proposal and oral) and a written exam based on material covered in the core classes.

#### **Written exam**

The written exam will be held on one day. The exam will consist of 8-10 questions and will be based on material from the core classes. Students will be required to answer six of these. Grading policies will follow past practice.

#### **Research component**

The research component of the exam will include

1. source papers identified by whole faculty by date #1,
2. final choice of source paper for each student will be approved by date #2,
3. complete written proposal due by date #3,
4. the oral presentation will be completed prior to date #4,
5. both written proposal and oral defense should be entirely the student's work as it is a take-home exam.

### **EXAM TIMING**

We are back to offering the candidacy twice per year. General schedules for the parallel Fall and Spring exam sequence are provided below. Dates for the upcoming exams, beginning in November 2011 are also provided.

A student may petition for a variation from the schedules outlined below (either original exam or retake)

1. with their adviser's approval, and
2. by notifying GAP prior to this exam.

Reasons for petitioning should be significant, such as fieldwork, grant deadlines, clearly articulated weaknesses that require extra time for well-planned remediation, or personal hardship.

#### **Candidacy exam timing for students entering with a Bachelors degree**

The timing of the PhD candidacy exam should be at the end of the student's second Fall semester. Having obtained their adviser's approval, the student may petition to take the exam earlier.

#### **Candidacy exam timing for students entering with a Masters degree**

These requirements apply to any student arriving with a relevant Masters degree, regardless of the institution (i.e. Penn State or another).

The timing of the PhD candidacy exam will be at the end of the student's first academic year (May). Having obtained their adviser's approval, the student may petition to take the exam earlier.

### **Conditions for candidacy retakes**

If the student has failed one component (written exam or research), then the decision to retake that component of the exam is at the discretion of the student.

If the student fails both components of the candidacy, then the decision for the student to retake the entire candidacy is at the discretion of the full faculty.

Unless otherwise approved, retakes of either component of the exam are required to be taken the next time the candidacy exam is offered.

### **Successful candidacy**

- (1) each component can be passed separately,
- (2) both components should be passed for admission to be complete, and
- (3) only a single retake of each component (written exam or research) is allowed.

### **Fall 2011 PhD candidacy exam milestones**

<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Due date</b>
Source papers identified by whole faculty	4 November
Final choice of source paper for each student approved by GAP	18 November
Complete written proposal due	2 January 2012
Written exam	6 January
Oral presentation completed	26 January

### General timeline for candidacy exam cycles

Milestone	Fall exam	Spring exam
Proposal topic assigned	Friday before Thanksgiving break	Friday before Spring break
Proposal due	1 <sup>st</sup> day Penn State opens after New Year	1 <sup>st</sup> day of exam week
Written exam taken	Friday immediately prior to Spring semester	Friday in the week <b>after</b> exam week
Oral defense must be completed by	Australia Day (January 26 <sup>th</sup> ) or next work day	Friday preceding Memorial Day

### Pictorial timeline of parallel candidacy exam schedules

