**Candidacy Examination and Dissertation Proposal Policy**

The Candidacy Examination is an oral examination in the student's primary area of study. It must take place after the Qualifying Examination is passed and the Ph.D. adviser is chosen.

## Schedule Candidacy Examination

Once you have a dissertation adviser and have identified a promising dissertation topic, and perhaps (though not necessarily) obtained some preliminary results, you should schedule your Candidacy Examination. Note that it is entirely acceptable to end up doing another closely related problem for your dissertation. Also, it is not appropriate to delay the Candidacy Examination until your dissertation is virtually complete.

## Request for Appointment of Committee to Conduct a Doctoral Candidacy Examination

The next step is to see the graduate studies director and fill out the Request for Appointment of Committee to Conduct a Doctoral Candidacy Examination form. Here you will select the committee. Note that this is not (necessarily) the same as the dissertation defense committee. This selection is done in consultation with your advisor and the director.

Also, you'll need to set a date for the examination (at least a few weeks hence) and decide on a title for your presentation at this time. Give the completed form to the director and see the secretarial staff to set up a room reservation.

## Presentation

Working closely with your dissertation adviser, you should develop a presentation with a write up on your dissertation topic; this write up is to be submitted to your committee at least two weeks before the exam. Your presentation must include:

1. A clear statement of the problem(s) which you propose to address in your dissertation.
2. An indication of the methods and/or techniques with which you propose to attack the problem(s) mentioned in (1).

## Examination

At the examination itself you will first give your presentation (approximately 30-45 minutes). The emphasis should be on the general framework of the proposed work, relating it to major themes in the relevant research area, as opposed to a presentation with a lot of technical detail. E

Essentially, you're showing that you are ready to do research in this area. This part of the examination will be open to anyone who wishes to attend.

After your oral presentation the general public will be allowed to ask questions, after which they will be excused from the examination. The committee will then proceed to question you about your proposal and the primary area of study. The entire exam will normally last about 60 to 90 minutes but could well go longer. The "primary area of study" here includes material in previous courses that leads into the proposed research. For example, a candidate in ring theory can be questioned about other areas of algebra that are necessary to develop the subject matter of the proposal.

After this period of questioning you will be excused, and the committee will determine if you have passed or failed and are to return at a later time to answer additional questions.

If after passing your candidacy exam you later change to a different dissertation topic entirely or change your adviser, then you will be required to take a new Candidacy Examination.

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