

Qualifying Examination Guidelines

The Qualifying Examination is the last step towards your Advancement to Candidacy in the doctoral program. The Qualifying Examination, and subsequent Advancement to Candidacy, are expected to occur in the third year (second year for students who entered with a master's degree) of your graduate enrollment. Before planning the Qualifying Examination, you need to ensure that the following conditions have been met:

- (a) You have completed your M.S. degree.
- (b) You have completed the Ph.D. course requirement.
- (c) You have successfully completed the Preliminary Examination.

Do not schedule the Qualifying Examination unless you have met the above requirements.

The Qualifying Examination is an oral examination in front of the Qualifying Examination Committee. The exam tests primarily your research proposal and your research competence. You should begin the examination with an oral dissertation proposal (no longer than 30 minutes of prepared material). This proposal will give rise to questions from the committee. While the examination centers around your dissertation topic, it also assesses the depth and breadth of your knowledge, and your aptitude in approaching and solving fundamental research problems. The examination is scheduled for approximately 2 hours.

The Qualifying Examination Committee must have a minimum of 4 members and a maximum of 5 members who are voting members of the University of California Academic Senate or by equivalent scholarly standing, by exception. Non-voting Senate members, faculty members from other universities, or non-Senate faculty with equivalent scholarly standing will be considered for general membership on the committee on an exception basis only. Only one exception will be considered. Candidacy committee members need not necessarily be from the Irvine Division, but a majority must hold primary or joint appointments in the Department of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering. The following additional criteria apply to the membership of the committee:

- 1] The Chair of the Candidacy Committee must hold either a primary or joint appointment in the Department of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering and must be a voting member of the UC Academic Senate. No exceptions to these requirements will be considered.
- 2] The requirement that a majority of voting members hold appointments in the Department of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering may be waived under exceptional circumstances. Non-voting Senate members, faculty members from other universities, or non-Senate faculty with equivalent scholarly standing will be considered for general membership on the committee on an exception only basis. Exceptions will be granted by the Dean of the Graduate Division.
- 3] The Candidacy Committee must include one Outside Member, i.e. a member of the Irvine Division of the UC Academic Senate who does not hold a primary appointment in the Department of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering of UCI.
- 4] If the Chair, Research/Thesis advisor or other member of the committee has a financial interest in an outside entity that carries a possibility of a conflict of interest potentially harmful to the graduate student, an oversight member must be appointed in addition to three general members.

A full description of the rules applying to the Candidacy Committee can be found in Regulation

918 of The Manual of the Irvine Division of the Academic Senate.

The procedures and deadlines for planning the Qualifying Examination are available in separate documents on the MAE web site. **They must be strictly followed.** If you have any questions on the exam, contact the Graduate Coordinator or the Graduate Advisor.