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## **Policies Governing Doctoral Degree Programs**

### **Oral Preliminary Examination**

The oral preliminary examination is taken near the completion of the student's course work. The oral examination is conducted by the student's doctoral committee, and should cover the student's knowledge in his or her major and minor subjects. The exam may cover the student's proposed research topic, although no more than one-half the time should be devoted to specific aspects of the proposal. The examination should be scheduled for at least two hours, and the exam date must be scheduled in the Graduate School at least two weeks in advance. If more than one negative vote is recorded by the examining committee, the candidate will have failed the oral examination. No more than two re-examinations are permitted by the Graduate School, although academic units may allow fewer re-examinations.

### **Final Examination**

After completion of or while concurrently registered for all work required by the program, the student must pass a final doctoral examination that may be written in part but must include an oral examination. The final oral examination must be scheduled in the Graduate School office at least two weeks prior to the date of the examination. All incomplete course work appearing on the program of study must be completed prior to scheduling the final oral examination.

The final oral examination consists of a public thesis defense followed by a closed session of the examining committee with the candidate. Under normal circumstances, the final oral examination should be scheduled for two hours.

All members of the student's graduate committee must approve the scheduling of the final examination.

It is expected that the thesis defense portion of the final oral exam be open to all interested persons and should be limited to one hour. After the open portion of the exam, the examining committee should exclude all other persons and continue with the examination of the candidate's knowledge of his or her field and the evaluation of the candidate's performance.

If the department favors a more elaborate presentation, it should be scheduled as a separate seminar. In any case, the time involved for the open presentation may not impinge upon time required for the examining committee to conduct appropriate, iterative oral inquiry with the candidate, to evaluate the candidate's performance, and to deliberate fully within the time constraints of the scheduled oral examination.

The examining committee consists of the student's doctoral committee and any additional members, including professors from other institutions, whom the major department may recommend. In the oral examination, the candidate is expected to defend the thesis and show a satisfactory knowledge of his or her field. If more than one negative vote is recorded by the examining committee, the candidate will have failed the examination. No more than two re-examinations are permitted by the Graduate School, although academic units may permit fewer re-examinations.

## **Policies Governing Master's Degree Programs**

### **Final Examination**

Successful completion of a final oral examination is required for all master's degrees with the exception of students who complete the nonthesis option under the EdM or complete the MBA degree. In those cases, nonthesis EdM students must take a final written examination. MBA students submit capstone projects that are assessed at the curricular core and graduate option levels, in addition to being assessed upon their fulfillment of graduate

learning outcomes. Some departments also require the student to pass a written exam prior to the oral exam.

The final oral examination for master's candidates may, at the discretion of the graduate program, consist of a public thesis defense followed by a closed session of the examining committee with the candidate. Under normal circumstances, the final oral examination should be scheduled for two hours.

For master's candidates whose programs require a thesis, not more than half of the examination period should be devoted to the presentation and defense of the thesis; the remaining time can be spent on questions relating to the student's knowledge of the major field, and minor field if a minor is included in the program of study. Graduate faculty serving on thesis-oriented master's degree programs may contribute to the direction of the student's thesis, will assess the student's thesis and his or her defense of it in the final oral examination, will vote to pass or fail the student, and may sign the thesis when it is in acceptable final form. The examining committee consists of at least four members of the graduate faculty—two in the major field, one in the minor field if a minor is included, and a Graduate Council representative. When a minor is not included, the fourth member may be from the graduate faculty at large. All members of the student's graduate committee must approve the scheduling of the final examination.

Students writing a thesis must have a Graduate Council representative on their committee. It is the student's responsibility to obtain his or her own Graduate Council representative from a list provided by the Graduate School. This must be done prior to scheduling the final exam.

When no thesis is involved, not more than half of the examination period should be devoted to the presentation of the research project; the remaining time can be spent on questions relating to the student's knowledge of the major field, and minor field if one is included in the program. For nonthesis master's degree programs, the major professor is responsible for directing and assigning a final grade for the research or culminating project. Other members of the nonthesis committee will assess the student's defense of the project in the final oral examination, as well as the student's knowledge of his or her field, and vote to pass or fail the student. The examining committee consists of three members of the graduate faculty—two in the major field and one in the minor field if a minor is included. When a minor is not included, the third member may be from the graduate faculty at large.