

August 16, 2006

QUALIFYING EXAM CHECKLIST: STUDENTS

_____ Pick up a form titled “APPLICATION FOR QUALIFYING EXAMINATION” from the Graduate Affairs Officer for the Biophysics Group or for a fillable version, download it from the Graduate Division website (Current Students: Applications & Forms). International students are expected to take their Qualifying examinations no later than the end of the fourth semester, advancing to candidacy by August 1 of the same year.

_____ Discuss the following with the Head Advisor; you should also discuss these topics with your thesis professor:

1. titles of three *broad* fields to be entered on the form (your thesis topic; a supporting discipline in the physical sciences; a supporting discipline in the biological sciences).
2. name of an *experienced faculty member* of the Biophysics Group, who will be chair of your Qualifying Exam committee.
3. names of potential faculty examiners who have Departmental affiliations in the relevant physical science and biological science areas, respectively, or otherwise have expertise that will be recognized by the Graduate Dean.

NOTE: The chair must be a member of the Biophysics Group; at least 2 and preferably 3 of the faculty should be members of the Group, but at least 1 must not be a faculty member in the Group.

NOTE: The policy of the Biophysics Group is that the questions the faculty discuss with you in the Qualifying Exam cover areas of both the biological sciences and physical sciences that are *relevant* to your research area. It is not intended that there be *formal examination in topics* declared for the Exam that lie far outside of what is related to the Inside Topic.

_____ *After* the Head Advisor approves of your plans, ask each of the identified faculty members whether they are available to serve on your Qualifying Exam Committee at a time that is agreeable for you.

_____ After you have gotten agreement from the faculty, fill out the “APPLICATION FOR QUALIFYING EXAMINATION” and bring it to the Head Advisor for signature.

_____ Turn in the signed “APPLICATION FOR QUALIFYING EXAMINATION” to the Biophysics Graduate Affairs Officer, who will send it in to the Graduate Dean. You will be notified by mail when the Dean has approved the Petition.

_____ When you have been notified that the Dean has appointed your Qualifying Exam Committee, meet with the Chair of your Qualifying Exam Committee.

1. Discuss what type of paper to write and distribute to your committee members, that will brief them on what your thesis research project is about (Inside Topic).
2. Consult with both your Thesis Professor and the Chair of your Qualifying Exam Committee to make sure that your write-up of the research project is clear and well-

done.

3. Distribute the write-up to all members of the Exam Committee and ask for individual appointments as early as possible, to discuss what you have written.

4. Allow as much as a month for additional review and time to make up for limitations that may have been identified in your discussion of the Inside Topic with each of the members of the Committee.

NOTE: The Biophysics Group does not have an Outside Topic; breadth is certified by the broad support required for the Inside Topic from both the physical sciences and the biological sciences.

_____ Choose a 2- or 3- week time-window when you want to schedule the exam (if this was not decided before the form was submitted).

1. Starting with the Chair of the Exam Committee, check again with all of the faculty members to identify 2 or more dates (and times of the day) when everyone is available for the *3-hour scheduled exam*.

2. Tell the Exam members the day and time that you finally select for the exam.

3. Tell the Graduate Affairs Officer for the Biophysics Group the day and time that you have chosen for the exam.

4. The Graduate Affairs Officer will help you to arrange a room for the Qualifying Exam.

_____ Be sure to schedule a number of practice exams with fellow graduate students and postdocs from your lab or from the Biophysics Group! These exams are often tougher and more unrealistic than the real thing! The point is that “practice exams” help you to become comfortable with the format, with being challenged, etc. It really *does* make the final Qualifying Exam situation much more comfortable for you if you “*practice*” a lot in advance.

_____ Make sure that the Chair of the Qualifying Exam Committee has explained everything clearly to you about how the exam is run, what you should expect to happen, and that you are comfortable with the arrangements that have been explained to you.

_____ After you have passed the Qualifying Exam, you will need to complete the form entitled “Application for Candidacy,” which is also found on the Graduate Division website. **File the advancement form no later than the end of the semester following the one in which you passes the QE.** International students are expected to take their Qualifying examinations no later than the end of the fourth semester, advancing to candidacy by August 1 of the same year. This entitles students to reduced non-resident tuition, significantly reducing costs for faculty. ***GET THE SIGNATURE OF THE HEAD ADVISOR, AND TURN IN THE PAPERWORK TO THE GRADUATE AFFAIRS OFFICER OF THE BIOPHYSICS GROUP.***