



## **The PH.D. COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION** (Procedures and Criteria for Assessment)

### **1. PROCEDURES:**

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of the Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination is to assess the candidate in two respects:

- i) the suitability and feasibility of the candidate's proposed PhD research
- ii) the candidate's competence to undertake that research.

#### **Procedures**

In preparation for the Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination, the candidate will prepare a Ph.D. research proposal in which:

(This description of the Ph.D. research proposal follows the prescription set out in the 2004 department document *Policy and Procedures in Graduate Studies - Department of Chemical Engineering.*)

- 1) the research problem is formulated, setting out the objectives, significance and scope of the research
- 2) the relevant literature is critically reviewed, including identification and interpretation of the principal theoretical and experimental contributions to the present state of knowledge in this area of research
- 3) proposed plans for obtaining, analyzing and interpreting the data are discussed
- 4) the main features of the equipment to be used or developed for use in the research are described
- 5) the time required to complete each of the main stages of the investigation is estimated.

The date and time for the Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination will be determined by the Coordinator of Graduate Studies in consultation with the Ph.D. candidate and the candidate's research supervisor. The examination must be held within 18 months of the candidate's initial registration as a Ph.D. student.

At least two weeks before the examination, a copy of the Ph.D. research proposal must be given to each of the members of the Ph.D. Comprehensive Examining Committee, which will consist of:

- Head of the Department (or delegate) – Chair
- Members of the Ph.D. Supervisory Committee
- Other members of the Department selected by the Department Head

## **2. CRITERIA for ASSESSMENT:**

The examination will be held in two parts, on the same day, with the same examiners for both parts. Each part is expected to last from 1.5 to 2 hours.

**Part 1** will be an examination of the suitability and feasibility of the candidate's proposed Ph.D. research. It will begin with a 15 to 20 minute presentation of the research proposal by the candidate. Following that presentation, members of the Examining Committee will question the candidate about the proposal.

**Part 2** will be an examination of the candidate's competence to undertake the research. The examiners should meet prior to Part 2, to agree on the subject areas from which questions for this part of the examination are to be selected.

Immediately following Part 2 the Examining Committee will reach a decision on the outcome of the Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination by majority vote. If that decision is "Passed", the School of Graduate Studies will be so advised. If the decision is "Failed", the Examining Committee may decide either to reexamine the candidate or to recommend to the department that the candidate be required to withdraw from the Ph.D. program. In the case of the latter recommendation, the department must then decide whether to recommend to Division III of the School of Graduate Studies and Research that the candidate be required to withdraw. The candidate will be informed of the decision of the Examining Committee as soon as the decision is reached. If the decision of the Examining Committee is "Failed", the committee will provide the candidate with a written explanation of the basis for that decision.

If the candidate is to be re-examined, the new examination must be held within three months of the original examination. If the decision at the reexamination is "Failed", the department will recommend to Division III that the candidate be required to withdraw.

### **Appeal Procedures**

The general guidelines for appealing an academic decision made by the department or a committee of the Department are set out in Section 8.8 of the graduate calendar <http://www.queensu.ca/calendars/sgsr/pg47.htm>. If a candidate wishes to appeal the decision of a Ph.D. Comprehensive Examining Committee on which the Head of the Department has not been a member, then he/she should direct that appeal to the Head of Department. However, if the Head of the Department has served as a member of that Ph.D. Comprehensive Examining Committee, then the candidate should direct any appeal of the decision of that Committee to the Chair of Division III of the School of Graduate Studies and Research.

### **Penalties**

A Ph.D. candidate who fails to meet the deadline for a Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination will be subject to the following penalties:

- 1) If the Comprehensive Examination (original examination or re-examination) has not been completed within the specified time period, the candidate will not be allowed to serve as a Teaching Assistant in the department during the next term in which undergraduate courses are offered.
- 2) If the Comprehensive Examination (original examination or re-examination) has not been completed within 3 months after the specified time period, the department will recommend to Division III of the School of Graduate Studies and Research that the candidate be required to withdraw from the Ph.D. program.