

Guidelines for the Ph.D. Candidacy Exam in Integrated Pharmaceutical Medicine

Purpose:

1. To evaluate the candidate's basic knowledge in the field
2. To evaluate the candidate's ability to organize and defend a hypothesis-based research project in grant format
3. To evaluate the candidate's ability to think and integrate ideas and concepts

Overview of the exam:

The Integrated Pharmaceutical Medicine program uses a grant proposal format as the basis for the candidacy evaluation. The grant proposal should be on a topic that is relevant to the student's field of research. The proposal should be based on clear hypotheses and should be developed based on real data. That is, the assumptions and hypotheses should be based on the student's own data and/or data obtained from the literature with proper citation.

Process for administering the exam:

The exam will be administered by the advisory committee. A moderator will be appointed to administer the exam and will not be involved directly in the questioning. Approximately eight (8) weeks prior to the scheduling of the candidacy exam, the student should meet with the advisory committee to discuss a general outline of the grant proposal. At this initial meeting, the advisory committee will discuss with the student the topic and general approach to writing the grant proposal. The advisory committee will share any major concerns they have regarding the approach including the hypotheses, proposed experiments, or other issues. Either at this meeting or in a subsequent meeting the advisory committee will approve the Doctoral Candidacy Exam Topic. **After the committee's approval is in place there should be no further discussion between the candidate and the advisory committee or other faculty.** The candidate is encouraged to talk with other students or postdoctoral fellows regarding the writing of the proposal and for help in practicing for the oral defense.

The actual examination will consist of an oral presentation by the student summarizing the grant proposal. The presentation should be 20-25 minutes in length. The oral presentation will be followed by two rounds of questioning. The first round will permit each advisory committee member to ask questions and engage in discussion with the candidate for approximately 10 minutes. The second round should be shorter in duration with approximately 15 minutes of time allocated per committee member. There are no absolute rules regarding the type of questions to be asked, though it would be reasonable for the first round to focus on issues specific to the proposal and the second round to be more general or more related to background information.

Outcome of the Exam:

There are three general possible outcomes; pass, conditional pass, fail. The outcome will be based both on the written document as well as the oral defense of the grant proposal. If the candidate receives a "conditional pass," then the student must fulfill the agreed-upon conditions either related more to the written document, the oral defense or both. A candidate who fails the exam, but otherwise is a student in good standing, will be given the opportunity to repeat the Candidacy Exam.

Failure to meet the candidacy exam timeline:

If a student fails to meet the two-week deadline for submitting the grant proposal to the committee, then the exam will be rescheduled with a **different topic** identified for the research proposal.

Sequence of events leading to the Ph.D. Candidacy Exam:

1. The following documents/information must be provided to the Program Director at least six weeks prior to the PhD Candidacy Exam:
 - a. A copy of the "Guidelines for the PhD Candidacy Exam" (found at http://www.neomed.edu/academics/graduatestudies/procedures-and-forms/guidelines-for-the-phd-candidacy-exam_ipm_approved.pdf) signed by the student and the supervisor. Signatures are required in order to ensure that the student and supervisor have read the guidelines.
 - b. A list of the PhD Candidacy Exam Committee (Chair, advisory committee, and the two proposed additional academic members of the University). At least one of the committee members must be from outside the department of the student's primary advisor.
 - c. The date on which the grant proposal needs to be handed in to the PhD Candidacy Examination Committee including the Chair and supervisor.
 - d. The date and time of the PhD candidacy exam.
 - e. The appended form "Proposed two faculty members to be added to the PhD Candidacy Exam Committee" indicating the fields of expertise of the two additional members and a description of their fields of expertise.
2. Once these documents have been received, they will be reviewed by the Program Director to ensure that the conditions for scheduling the PhD Candidacy Exam have been met.
3. The PhD Candidacy Exam will be officially scheduled by the IPM Program Coordinator.
4. Once the PhD Candidacy Examining Committee has been approved by the Program Director, a copy of the form will be sent to every member of the Committee. The scheduling of the PhD candidacy exam will not take place until the student and supervisor indicate that they have read and will adhere to these guidelines.
5. A copy of the completed grant proposal that serves as the Candidacy Exam will be submitted to the Program Director.

The scheduling of the Ph.D. candidacy exam will not take place until the student and supervisor indicate that they have read and will adhere to these guidelines. Please sign below to indicate that you have read the "Guidelines for the Ph.D. Candidacy Exam" and agree to adhere to these guidelines.

Student Signature _____ Date _____

Supervisor Signature _____ Date _____